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BARROW'S SERMONS.

SERMONS,

ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

BY

ISAAC BARROW, D.D.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOLUME III,

containing

TWENTY-FOUR SERMONS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

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PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL

SERMON L.

ON INDUSTRY IN GENERAL.

ECCLES. ix. 10.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.

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IN St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, among divers excellent rules of life, prescribed by that great master, this is one, Τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροι, *Be not slothful in business*, or to business; and in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, among other principal virtues, or worthy accomplishments, for *abounding* wherein the Apostle commendeth those Christians, he ranketh *all diligence*, or industry exercised in all affairs and duties incumbent on them: this is that virtue, the practice whereof in this moral precept or advice the royal Preacher doth recommend unto us; being indeed an eminent virtue, of very general use, and powerful influence upon the management of all our affairs, or in the conduct of our whole life.

Rom. xii. 11.

Πᾶσα σπουδή. 2 Cor. viii. 7.

Industry, I say, in general, touching all matters incident, which *our hand findeth to do*, that is, which dispensation of Providence doth offer, or which choice of reason embraceth, for employing our active powers of soul and body, the Wise Man doth recommend; and to pressing the observance of his advice (waving all curious remarks either critical or logical upon the words) I shall presently apply my discourse, proposing divers considerations apt to excite us thereto; only first, let me briefly describe it, for our better apprehension of its true notion and nature.

SERM. I.

By industry we understand a serious and steady application of mind, joined with a vigorous exercise of our active faculties, in prosecution of any reasonable, honest, useful design, in order to the accomplishment or attainment of some considerable good; as for instance, a merchant is industrious, who continueth intent and active in driving on his trade for acquiring wealth; a soldier is industrious, who is watchful for occasion, and earnest in action toward obtaining the victory; and a scholar is industrious, who doth assiduously bend his mind to study for getting knowledge.

Industry doth not consist merely in action; for that is incessant in all persons[a], our mind being a restless thing, never abiding in a total cessation from thought or from design; being like a ship in the sea, if not steered to some good purpose by reason, yet tossed by the waves of fancy, or driven by the winds of temptation somewhither. But the direction of our mind to some good end, without roving or flinching, in a straight and steady course, drawing after it our active powers in execution thereof, doth constitute industry; the which therefore usually is attended with labour and pain; for our mind (which naturally doth affect variety and liberty, being apt to loathe familiar objects, and to be weary of any constraint) is not easily kept in a constant attention to the same thing; and the spirits employed in thought are prone to flutter and fly away, so that it is hard to fix them; and the corporeal instruments of action being strained to a high pitch, or detained in a tone, will soon feel a lassitude somewhat offensive to nature; whence labour or pain is commonly reckoned an ingredient of industry, and laboriousness is a name signifying it; upon which account this virtue, as involving labour, deserveth a peculiar commendation; it being then most laudable to follow the dictates of reason, when so doing is attended with difficulty and trouble.

Such in general I conceive to be the nature of industry; to the practice whereof the following considerations may induce.

[a] Ἡ γὰρ ψυχὴ φύσιν ἔχουσα τῷ κινεῖσθαι διαπαντὸς, οὐκ ἀνέχεται ἠρεμεῖν, ἔμπρακτον τὸ ζῶον τοῦτο ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς, &c. *Chrys. in Act. Or.* 35.

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1. We may consider that industry doth befit the constitution and frame of our nature; all the faculties of our soul and organs of our body being adapted in a congruity and tendency thereto: our hands are suited for work, our feet for travel, our senses to watch for occasion of pursuing good and eschewing evil, our reason to plod and contrive ways of employing the other parts and powers; all these, I say, are formed for action; and that not in a loose and gadding way, or in a slack and remiss degree, but in regard to determinate ends, with vigour requisite to attain them; and especially our appetites do prompt to industry, as inclining to things not obtainable without it; according to that aphorism of the Wise Man, Ἐπιθυμίαι ὀκνηρὸν ἀποκτείνουσιν—*The desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour;* that is, he is apt to desire things which he cannot attain without pains; and not enduring them, he for want thereof doth feel a deadly smart and anguish: wherefore in not being industrious we defeat the intent of our Maker; we pervert his work and gifts; we forfeit the use and benefit of our faculties; we are bad husbands of nature's stock. Prov. xxi. 25. xiii. 4.

2. In consequence hereto industry doth preserve and perfect our nature, keeping it in good tune and temper, improving and advancing it toward its best state. The labour of our mind in attentive meditation and study doth render it capable and patient of thinking upon any object or occasion, doth polish and refine it by use, doth enlarge it by accession of habits, doth quicken and rouse our spirits, dilating and diffusing them into their proper channels. The very labour of our body doth keep the organs of action sound and clean, discussing fogs and superfluous humours, opening passages, distributing nourishment, exciting vital heat: barring the use of it, no good constitution of soul or body can subsist; but a foul rust, a dull numbness, a resty listlessness, a heavy unweildiness must seize on us[b]; our spirits will be stifled and choked, our hearts

[b] Πάντα γὰρ ἡ ἀργία βλάπτει, καὶ τὰ μέλη σώματος αὐτὰ, &c. *Chrys. in Act. Orat.* 35.

Πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ τοιοῦτο τὸ σῶμα ἔκλυτον, &c. *Ibid.*

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will grow faint and languid, our parts will flag and decay; the vigour of our mind and the health of our body will be much impaired.

It is with us as with other things in nature[c], which by motion are preserved in their native purity and perfection, in their sweetness, in their lustre, rest corrupting, debasing, and defiling them. If the water runneth, it holdeth clear, sweet, and fresh; but stagnation turneth it into a noisome puddle: if the air be fanned by winds, it is pure and wholesome; but from being shut up, it groweth thick and putrid; if metals be employed, they abide smooth and splendid, but lay them up, and they soon contract rust; if the earth be belaboured with culture it yieldeth corn, but by lying neglected, it will be overgrown with brakes and thistles[d]; and the better its soil is, the ranker weeds it will produce: all nature is upheld in its being, order, and state, by constant agitation; every creature is incessantly employed in action conformable to its designed end and use; in like manner the preservation and improvement of our faculties depends on their constant exercise.

3. As we naturally were composed, so by divine appointment we were originally designed for industry; God did not intend that man should live idly, even in his best state, or should enjoy happiness without taking pains, but

Gen. ii. 15. did provide work enough even in Paradise itself; for *the Lord God*, saith the text, *took man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it;* so that had we continued happy, we must have been ever busy, by our industry sustaining our life, and securing our pleasure; otherwise weeds might have overgrown Paradise, and that

Prov. xxiv. 30, 31. of Solomon might have been applicable to Adam; *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof.*

[c] Ποῖος ἵππος χρήσιμος, ὁ τρυφῶν, ἢ ὁ ἐργαζόμενος; ποία ναῦς, ἡ πλέουσα, ἢ ἡ ἀργοῦσα; ποῖον ὕδωρ, τὸ τρέχον, ἢ τὸ ἑστώς; ποῖος σίδηρος, ὁ κείμενος, ἢ ὁ ἐργαζόμενος, &c. *Chrys. in Act. Orat.* 35.

[d] Neglectis urenda filix innascitur agris. *Hor. Ser.* i. 3.
Plut. περὶ παίδων ἀγωγῆς, p. 3. edit. Steph.

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4. By our transgression and fall the necessity of industry (together with a difficulty of obtaining good, and avoiding evil) was increased to us; being ordained both as a just punishment for our offences, and as an expedient remedy of our needs: for thereupon *the ground was cursed to bring forth thorns and thistles to us;* and it was our doom pronounced by God's own mouth, *In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground:* so that now labour is fatally natural to us; now *man,* as Job saith, *is born to labour, as the sparks fly upward,* (or, *as the vulture's chickens soar aloft,* according to the Greek interpreters[c].)

Gen. iii. 17. Gen. iii. 19. Job v. 7.

5. Accordingly our condition and circumstances in the world are so ordered, as to require industry; so that without it we cannot support our life in any comfort or convenience; whence St. Paul's charge upon the Thessalonians, that *if any one would not work, neither should he eat,* is in a manner a general law imposed on mankind by the exigency of our state, according to that of Solomon; *The idle soul shall suffer hunger,* and, *The sluggard, who will not plough by reason of the cold, shall beg in harvest, and have nothing.*

2 Thess. iii. 10. Prov. xix. 15. Prov. xx. 4.

Of all our many necessities, none can be supplied without pains, wherein all men are obliged to bear a share; every man is to work for his food, for his apparel, for all his accommodations, either immediately and directly, or by commutation and equivalence; for the gentleman himself cannot (at least worthily and inculpably) obtain them otherwise than by redeeming them from the ploughman and the artificer, by compensation of other cares and pains conducible to public good.

The wise Poet did observe well when he said,

——— Pater ipse colendi
Haud facilem esse viam voluit. *Virgil. Georg.* i.

And St. Chrysostom doth propose the same observation,

[c] Ἀλλ' ἄνθρωπος γεννᾶται κόπῳ· νεοσσοὶ δὲ γυπὸς ὑψηλὰ πέτονται. LXX. Interp. *Now* great travail (as the Son of Sirach saith) is created for every man; (ἀσχολία μεγάλη ἔκτισται παντὶ ἀνθρώπῳ, &c. Eccles. xl. 1.) and a heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam, &c.

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that God, to whet our mind [f], and keep us from moping, would not that we should easily come by the fruits of the earth, without employing much art and many pains; in order thereto there must be skill used in observing seasons, and preparing the ground; there must be labour spent in manuring, in delving and ploughing, in sowing, in weeding, in fencing it; there must be pains taken in reaping, in gathering, in laying up, in thrashing and dressing the fruit ere we can enjoy it; so much industry is needful to get bread: and if we list to fare more daintily, we must either hunt for it, using craft and toil to catch it out of the woods, the water, the air; or we must carefully wait on those creatures, of which we would serve ourselves, feeding them that they may feed us; such industry is required to preserve mankind from starving. And to guard it from other inconveniences, mischiefs, and dangers surrounding us, it is no less requisite: for to shelter us from impressions of weather, we must spin, we must weave, we must build; and in order thereto we must scrape into the bowels of the earth, to find our tools; we must sweat at the anvil, to forge them for our use; we must frame arms, to defend our safety and our store from the assaults of wild beasts, or of more dangerous neighbours, wild men. To furnish accommodations for our curiosity and pleasure, or to provide for the convenience and ornament of our life, still greater measures of industry are demanded; to satisfy those intents, a thousand contrivances of art, a thousand ways of trade and business do serve, without which they are not attainable. In whatever condition any man is, in what state soever he be placed, whatsoever calling or way of life he doth embrace, some peculiar business is thence imposed on him, which he cannot with any advantage or good success, with any grace, with any comfort to himself, or satisfaction to others, manage without competent industry: nothing will go on of itself, without

[f] Διὰ τοῦτο εἰς ἀνάγκην κατέστησεν ἐργασίας ὁ Θεὸς, &c. *Chrys. in Act. Hom.* 35.

——— curis acuens mortalia corda;
Nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno. *Virg. Georg.* i.

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our care to direct it, and our pains to hold it, and forward it in the right course: all which things shew that divine wisdom did intend that we should live in the exercise of industry, or not well without it; having so many needs to be supplied, so many desires to be appeased thereby; being exposed to so many troubles and difficulties, from which we cannot extricate ourselves without it. But farther yet,

6. Let us consider that industry hath annexed thereto, by divine appointment and promise, the fairest fruits, and the richest rewards: all good things (being either such in themselves, or made such by human esteem) are the fruits of industry; ordered to sprout from it, under the protection and influence of God's blessing, which commonly doth attend it.

All good things indeed are the gifts of God, and freely dispensed by his hand; but he doth not give them absolutely without condition, nor miraculously without concurrence of ordinary means: by supporting our active powers, and supplying needful aid to our endeavours; by directing and upholding us in the course of our action; by preventing or removing obstacles that might cross us; by granting that final success which dependeth on his pleasure, he doth confer them on us; our hand commonly is God's hand, by which he worketh good, and reacheth out benefits to us; governing and wielding it as he pleaseth.

Ps. xxxvii. 3, 23. Prov. iii. 6. Dii laboribus omnia vendunt. Judg. vi. 36. vii. 7. 2 Kings v. 2. Josh. i. 17, 9.

God indeed could not well proceed otherwise in dispensing his favours to us; not well, I say; that is, not without subverting the method of things which himself hath established; not without slighting and voiding his own first bounty, or rendering the common gifts of nature (our reason, our senses, our active powers) vain and useless; not without making us incapable of any praise, or any reward g, which suppose works achieved by our earnest endeavour; not without depriving us of that sweetest

g Καὶ τινος ἐμελλες λαμβάνειν τὸν μισθὸν, εἰ τὸ πᾶν ἐμελλεν ἔσεσθαι τοῦ Θεοῦ. *Chrys. in Eph. Orat.* 2.

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content, which springeth from enjoying the fruit of our labour.

Hence it is, that whatever in holy Scripture is called the gift of God, is otherwhile affirmed to be the effect of industry; it being the useful condition upon which, and the instrument whereby divine Providence conveyeth good things to us[h]: what God said to Joshua, doth imply the general method of his proceeding, *Only be thou strong and courageous—that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest.* Josh. i. 7.

Hence whatever we are directed to pray for, we are also exhorted to work for[i]; declaring thereby, that we are serious in our devotion, and do not mock God, asking that of him, which we deem not worth our pains to acquire. It was well said of Cato in Sallust, *Vigilando, agendo, bene consulendo, prospere omnia cedunt: ubi socordiæ te atque ignaviæ tradideris, nequicquam Deos implores; irati, infestique sunt.* We are bid to pray even for our daily bread, yet we may starve if we do not work for it; and in St. Paul's judgment deserve to do so.

Hence we are bound to thank God for all those things, for the want of which we must thank ourselves, and condemn our own sloth.

Hence, although we should cast our care on God, and rely on his providence, being solicitous for nothing; yet we must not so trust him, as to tempt him, by neglecting the means, which he doth offer, of relieving ourselves; to be presumptuously slothful being no less blameable, than to be distrustfully careful.

Hence God in all such cases when we do need any good thing, is said to be our helper and succourer to the obtaining it; which doth imply that we must co-operate with him, and join our forces to those which he doth af-

[h] Περὶ ἐκεῖνα μᾶλλον ἡ ψυχὴ διάκειται, ὑπὲρ ὧν ἔκαμε· διὰ τοῦτο καὶ πόνους ἀνέμιξεν ἀρετῇ οἰκειῶσαι αὐτῇ ταύτην βελόμενος. *Chrys. in Joh. Or.* 36.

Διὰ τοῦτο ὑ τὸ πᾶν ἑαυτῷ ἐποίησεν, ἀλλ' ἀφῆκέ τι ἐφ' ἡμῖν εἶναι, ἵνα εὐπρόσωπον λάβῃ πρόφασιν τῷ δικαίως ἡμᾶς στεφανῶν. *Chrys. Tom. Or.* 28.

[i] Αὐτός τι νῦν δρῶν, εἶτα τὸν θεὸν κάλει. *Cato apud Sal. in bello Catil.*

Τὰν χεῖρα ποτιφέροντα δεῖ τὰν τύχαν ἐπικαλεῖν. *Plut. Apoph. Lac.*

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ford; so that as we can do nothing without him, so he will do nothing without us; yea, so that sometimes we are said also to help God; *Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.* If ever God doth perform all without human labour conspiring, it is only in behalf of those who are ready to do their best, but unable to do any thing, being overpowered by the insuperable difficulty of things: but he never doth act miracles or controul nature; he never doth stretch forth his arm, or interpose special power in favour of wilful and affected sluggards.

Judg. v 23. Psal. lxxii. 12. xxii. 11. 2 Cor. xii. 10. 2 Chron. xiv. 11. 1 Sam. xiv. 6.

In fine, it is very plain both in common experience, declaring the course of providence, and in holy Scripture, expressing God's intention, that Almighty God doth hold forth all good things as the prizes and recompences of our vigilant care, and painful endeavour; as by surveying particulars we may clearly discern.

Nothing is more grateful to men, than *prosperous success* in their undertakings, whereby they attain their ends, satisfy their desires, save their pains, and come off with credit; this commonly is the effect of industry[k]; (which commandeth fortune, to which all things submit and serve,) and scarce ever is found without it: an industrious person, who as such is not apt to attempt things impossible or unpracticable, can hardly fail of compassing his designs, because he will apply all means requisite, and bend all his forces thereto; striving to break through all difficulties, and to subdue all oppositions thwarting his purposes; but nothing of worth or weight can be achieved with half a mind, with a faint heart, with a lame endeavour: any enterprise undertaken without resolution, managed without care, prosecuted without vigour, will easily be dashed and prove abortive, ending in disappointment, damage, disgrace, and dissatisfaction: so the Wise Man doth assure us; *The soul*, saith he, *of the sluggard desireth*, Prov. xiii. 4.

[k] Τῆς ἐπιμελείας πάντα δῶλα γίγνεται. *Antiph.*
Quodcunque imperavit sibi animus, obtinuit, &c. *Sen. de Ira*, ii. 12.

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and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat; the one pineth away with ineffectual and fruitless desires; the other thriveth upon satisfaction in prosperous success.

Prov. xxi. 25. Prov. xv. 30.

Plentiful accommodations for our sustenance and convenience all men will agree to be very desirable: and these are indeed the blessings of him, who *visiteth the earth and enricheth it;* who *crowneth the year with his goodness,* and *whose clouds drop fatness;* but they are so dispensed by heaven, that industry must concur therewith in deriving them to us, and sloth will debar us of them; for *he,* saith the holy Oracle, *that tilleth his land, shall be satisfied with bread; and the thoughts of the diligent alone tend to plenteousness;* but *the sluggard shall beg in harvest, and have nothing;* and *the idle soul shall suffer hunger.*

Ps. lxv. 9, 11.

Prov. xii. 11. Prov. xxi. 5. (*deest in* LXX.) Prov. xx. 4. xix. 15.

Wealth is that, which generally men of all things are wont to affect and covet with most ardent desire, as the great store-house of their needs and conveniences, the sure bulwark of their state and dignity: the universal instrument of compassing their designs and pleasures; and most evident it is, that in the natural course of things, industry is the way to acquire it, to secure it, to improve and enlarge it: the which course, pursued innocently and modestly, God will be so far from obstructing, that he will further and bless it; for that indeed it would be a flaw in providence, if honest industry, using the means it affordeth, should fail of procuring a competency; which joined with a pious contentedness, in St. Paul's computation, is *great wealth.* Wherefore although Solomon telleth us, that *the blessing of the Lord is that which maketh rich,* yet doth he not forget or contradict himself, when he also doth affirm, that *the hand of the diligent maketh rich;* and that *he who gathereth by labour shall increase;* because God blesseth the industrious, and by his own hand, as the most proper instrument, maketh him rich. When the Preacher said, *There is a man to whom God hath given riches and wealth,* he knew well enough what man it was, to whom God giveth them; and that sluggards were not fit objects of that liberality; for he had observed it to be

1 Tim. vi. 6. Prov. xv. 16. x. 22. xxii. 4. 2 Chron. xxix. 12. Eccles. v. 19. Prov. x. 4. xiii. 11. Eccles. vi. 1, 2.

St. Paul exhorteth to *work with our hands,*

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their doom to be poor and beggarly, their nature to waste and embezzle an estate; he could assure us, that *drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags;* he could propound it as a certain observation, that *he who is slothful in his work, is brother to a great waster;* or that want of industry in our business will no less impair our estate, than prodigality itself; he could more than once warn the slothful, that if he did *sleep on*, or persist in his sluggish way, indigency would surprise and seize on him with an insupportable violence: *So*, saith he, *shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.*

ἵνα μηδενὸς χρείαν ἔχητε. 1 Thes. iv. 11. Prov. xxiii. 21. xviii. 9. Prov. x. 4. Prov. vi. 11. xxiv. 34.

Another darling of human affection (and a jewel indeed of considerable worth and use in our life) is honour, or reputation among men: this also plainly, after the common reason and course of things, is purchased and preserved by industry: for he that aspireth to worthy things, and assayeth laudable designs, pursuing them steadily with serious application of heart, and resolute activity, will rarely fail of good success, and consequently will not miss honour, which ever doth crown victory; and if he should hap to fail in his design, yet he will not lose his credit; for having meant well, and done his best, all will be ready to excuse, many to commend him; the very qualities which industry doth exercise, and the effects which it doth produce, to beget honour, as being ornaments of our person and state. God himself (from whom *honour cometh*, and whose special prerogative it is to bestow it, he, as King of the world, being the fountain of honour) will be concerned to dignify an industrious management of his gifts with that natural and proper recompence thereof; conducting him who fairly treadeth in the path of honour, that he shall safely arrive unto it. It is therefore a matter of easy observation, which the wise Prince doth prompt us to mark; *Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men:* that is, diligence, as it is the fairest, so it is the surest way to the best preferment: as it qualifieth a man for employment, and rendereth him useful to the world, so it will procure

1 Chron. xxix. 11. Dan. v. 18. Eccles. v. 19. Prov. xxii. 29.

SERM. L.

worthy employment for him, and attract the world to him; as the same great author again doth assert: *The hand*, saith he, *of the diligent shall bear rule;* yea, so honourable a thing is industry itself, that an exercise thereof in the meanest rank is productive of esteem, as the Wise Man again doth observe and tell us; *He that waiteth on his master* (that is, with diligence attendeth on the business committed to him) *shall be honoured.*

Prov. xii. 24.

Prov. xxvii. 18.

Ὃς φυλάσσει τὸν ἑαυτοῦ κύριον, τιμηθήσεται.

No industrious man is contemptible; for he is ever looked upon as being in a way of thriving, of working himself out from any straits, of advancing himself into a better condition. But without industry we cannot expect any thing but disrespect, shame, and reproach, which are the certain portion of the slothful; he not having the heart to enterprise, or the resolution and patience to achieve any thing deserving regard, or apt to procure it; he wanting all the ornaments and good fruits that grow from industry; he being only fit for a sordid and servile condition; whence the *slothful*, saith Solomon, *shall be under tribute;* and, *He that sleepeth in harvest, is a son that causeth shame*, he causeth it to his relations by his beggarly accoutrements, he causeth it much more to himself by his despicable faultiness, and by the disgraceful consequences of it.

Prov. xii. 24.

Δόλιοι δὲ ἔσονται ἐν φορολογίᾳ, Prov. x. 5.

Another yet more precious good, far surpassing all external advantages of our state; the which in the judgment of him who (together with it having a full possession of all secular prosperity, wealth, dignity, and power) was best able to prize it, *is better than rubies, and incomparably doth excel all things that may be desired*, as ennobling, enriching, and embellishing our better part: wisdom, I mean, or a good comprehension, and right judgment about matters of highest importance to us, is the prize of industry, and not to be gained without it; nature conferreth little thereto [1], fortune contributeth much less; it cannot be bought at any rate; *It cannot*, saith Job, *be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof: it cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the pre-*

Prov. viii. 11. iii. 14, 15. iv. 7. Job xxviii. 18.

Job xxviii. 15, 16.

[1] Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium. *Hor. de Arte Poet.*

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cious onyx, or the sapphire; it is the offspring of watchful observation and experience, of serious meditation and study; of careful reflection on things, marking, comparing, and weighing their nature, their worth, their tendencies and consequences; these are needful to the getting of wisdom, because truth, which it seeketh, commonly doth not lie in the surface, obvious to a superficial glance, nor only dependeth on a simple consideration of few things; but is lodged deep in the bowels of things, and under a knotty complication of various matters; so that we must dig to come at it, and labour in unfolding it: nor is it an easy task to void the prejudices springing from inclination or temper, from education or custom, from passion and interest, which cloud the mind, and obstruct the attainment of wisdom.

If we will have it, we must get it as Solomon himself did, that great master of it. How was that? *I gave*, saith he, *my heart to know wisdom.* He who made it his option and choice before all things; who so earnestly and so happily did pray for it; upon whom it is so expressly said, that God in a special manner and plentiful measure did bestow it; who averreth God to be the sole donor of it, (for, *The Lord*, saith he, *giveth wisdom, out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding;*) yet even he did first give his heart to it, before it was given into his heart: he did not only gape for it, to receive it by mere infusion; but he worked and studied hard for it. He was indeed a great student, an inquisitive searcher into nature, a curious observer of the world, a profound considerer and comparer of things; and by that industrious course, promoted by divine blessing, he did arrive to that great stock of so renowned a wisdom.

Eccles. i. 17. ii. 3. 1 Kings iii. 9. iv. 29. Wisd. viii. 21. ix. 17. Eccles. ii. 26. Jam. i. 5. Prov. ii. 6.

And the same method it is which he prescribeth to us for getting it; exhorting us, that we *incline our ear unto wisdom, and apply our heart to understanding;* that we *cry after knowledge, and lift up our voice for understanding:* that we *seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures;* in following which course he doth assure us of good success; for *then*, saith he, *shalt thou under-*

Prov. ii. 2, 3, 4.

SERM. L.

stand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God, which is *the head* or chief part of *wisdom;* and *Blessed,* saith he again, in the person and place of wisdom itself, *is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors; for he that findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.* It is the way he supposeth of finding wisdom, to watch assiduously, to wait diligently upon the means of attaining her; and how infallible the acquist of her is thereby, she doth again by his mouth thus acquaint us; *I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me;* and *she,* saith his imitator, *is easily seen of them that love her, and found of such as seek her; whoso seeketh her early, shall have no great travel, for he shall find her sitting at his doors.*

Prov. viii. 34, 35.

Prov. viii. 17.

Wisd. vi. 12, 13, 14.

This indeed is the only way; idleness is not capable of so rich and noble a purchase: a slothful person may be conceited, yea needs must be so; but he can never be wise: *A sluggard,* saith Solomon, *is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason.* This conceit of wisdom is a natural issue of his ignorance; and it is indeed no small part of his folly, that he doth not perceive it; being no less stupid in reflection on his own mind, than in considering other matters; being always in a slumber, he will often fall into such pleasant dreams; and no wonder that he should presume upon abundance of knowledge, who not listing to take any pains in the search or discussion of things, doth snatch the first appearances, doth embrace every suggestion of his fancy, every conceit gratifying his humour, for truth.

Prov. xxvi. 16.

What should I speak of learning, or the knowledge of various things, transcending vulgar apprehension? Who knoweth not that we cannot otherwise reach any part of that, than by assiduous study and contemplation? Who doth not find that all the power in the world is not able to command, nor all the wealth of the Indies to purchase, one notion? Who can be ignorant, that no wit alone, or strength of parts can suffice, without great industry, to frame any science, to learn any one tongue, to know the

history of nature, or of Providence? it is certainly by Horace's method [g], SERM. L.

Multa tulit, fecitque puer,——

by much exercise and endurance of pains, that any one can arrive to the mark of being learned or skilful in any sort of knowledge.

But farther yet, Virtue, the noblest endowment and richest possession whereof man is capable; the glory of our nature, the beauty of our soul, the goodliest ornament and the firmest support of our life [h]; that also is the fruit and blessing of industry; that of all things most indispensably doth need and require it. It doth not grow in us by nature, nor befall us by fortune; for nature is so far from producing it, that it yieldeth mighty obstacles and resistances to its birth, there being in the best dispositions much averseness from good, and great proneness to evil; fortune doth not further its acquists, but casteth in rubs and hindrances thereto, every condition presenting its allurements, or its affrightments from it; all things within us and about us conspire to render its production and its practice laborious.

It is ('tis true) a gift of heaven, and cannot be obtained without a special influence of divine grace; but is given as children are, (of whom it is said, *Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward,*) not without sore travail and labour of the mother, not without grievous difficulty and pangs in the birth. In our conversion to embrace virtue God doth guide us; but to what? to sit still? No, to walk, to run in his ways: Grace doth move us, but whereto? to do nothing? No, but to stir, and act vigorously; *The holy Spirit doth help our infirmities:* but how could it help them, if we did not conjoin our best, though weak, endeavours with its operations? To what doth it συναντιλαμβάνειν, or *co-help* Psal. cxxvii. 3. Rom. viii. 26. συναντιλαμβάνεται. Heb. xii. 4. Rom. ii. 10. Acts x. 35.

[g] Qui cupit optatam cursu contingere metam,
Multa tulit, fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit. *Hor. de Art. Poet.*

[h] Τῇ μὲν κακίᾳ ἡδονῇ, τῇ δὲ ἀρετῇ συγκεκλήρωται πόνος. *Chrys. in Joh. Or.* 36.
Κακία μὲν γὰρ αὐτοδίδακτον· ἀρετὴ δὲ σὺν πόνῳ κτᾶται. *Scn. de Provid.* 2.

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us, but *to strive against sin, to work righteousness*, to perform duty with earnest intention of mind, and laborious activity? *God*, saith St. Chrysostom, *hath parted virtue with us, and neither hath left all to be in us, lest we should be elated to pride, nor himself hath taken all, lest we should decline to sloth* [i].

Indeed the very nature and essence of virtue doth consist in the most difficult and painful efforts of soul: in the extirpating rooted prejudices and notions from our understanding; in bending a stiff will, and rectifying crooked inclinations; in overruling a rebellious temper; in curbing eager and importunate appetites; in taming wild passions; in withstanding violent temptations; in surmounting many difficulties, and sustaining many troubles; in struggling with various unruly lusts within, and encountering many stout enemies abroad, which assault our reason, and *war against our soul:* in such exercises its very being lieth; its birth, its growth, its subsistence dependeth on them; so that from any discontinuance or remission of them it would soon decay, languish away, and perish.

What attention, what circumspection, and vigilancy of mind, what intention of spirit, what force of resolution, what command and care over ourselves doth it require, to keep our hearts from vain thoughts and evil desires: to guard our tongue from wanton, unjust, uncharitable discourse; to render our steps uprightly and steadily in all the paths of duty? Καὶ τί οὐκ ἐπίπονον τῶν τῆς ἀρετῆς; *and what*, as St. Chrysostom asketh, *of all things belonging to virtue is not laborious?* It is no small task to know it, wherein it consisteth, and what it demandeth of us; it is a far more painful thing to conform our practice unto its rules and dictates.

Chrys. in. Joh. Or. 36.

[i] Ἐμεμίσατο παρὰ ἡμᾶς τὴν ἀρετὴν ὁ Θεὸς, καὶ οὔτε ἐφ ἡμῖν ἀφῆκε τὸ πᾶν εἶναι, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ἀπόνοιαν ἐκπαιρώμεθα, οὔτε αὐτὸς τὸ πᾶν ἔλαβεν, ἵνα μὴ εἰς ῥᾳθυμίαν ἀποκλίνωμεν· ἀλλ', &c. *Chrys. Tom. 5. Or. 28.*

Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἡ περὶ τὰ καλὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐγχείρησις δίχα τῆς ἄνωθεν βοηθείας τελειωθήσεται· οὐδὲ ἡ ἄνωθεν χάρις ἐπὶ τὸν μὴ σπουδάζοντα παραγένοιτ' ἄν, ἀλλ' ἑκάτερα συγκεκρᾶσθαι προσήκει, σπουδήν τε ἀνθρωπίνην, καὶ τὴν διὰ πίστεως ἄνωθεν καθήκουσαν συμμαχίαν εἰς τελείωσιν ἀρετῆς. *Bas. Const. Mon.* cap. 15.

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If travelling in a rough way [1]; if climbing up a steep hill; if combating stern foes, and fighting sharp battles; if crossing the grain of our nature and desires; if continually holding a strict rein over all our parts and powers, be things of labour and trouble, then greatly such is the practice of virtue.

Indeed each virtue hath its peculiar difficulty, needing much labour to master it: *Faith* is called ἔργον πίστεως, *the work of faith;* and it is no such easy work, as may be imagined, to bring our hearts unto a thorough persuasion about truths crossing our sensual conceits, and controlling our peevish humours; unto a perfect submission of our understanding, and resignation of our will to whatever God teacheth or prescribeth; to a firm resolution of adhering to that profession, which exacteth of us so much pains, and exposeth us to so many troubles.

1 Thes. i. 3. 2 Thes. i. 11. John vi. 29.

Charity is also a laborious exercise of many good works; and he that will practise it, must in divers ways labour hardly; he must labour in voiding from his soul many dispositions deeply radicated therein by nature, opinion, and custom; envy, frowardness, stubbornness, perverse and vain selfishness; from whence wrath, revenge, spite, and malice do spring forth. He must labour in effectual performance of all good offices, and in catching all occasions of doing good; he must exert that κόπον ἀγάπης, that *labour of love*, whereof St. Paul doth speak; he must (as that holy Apostle directeth, not only in precept, but by his own practice) work with his own hands, that he may supply the wants of his neighbour.

Gal. vi. 10. 1 Thes. i. 3. Heb. vi. 10. Eph. iv. 28. Acts xx. 35.

Hope itself (which one would think, when grounded well, should be a no less easy than pleasant duty) doth need much labour to preserve it safe, straight, and stable, among the many waves and billows of temptation assaying to shake and subvert it; whence *a patience of hope* is recommended to us; and we so often are exhorted to hold it fast, to keep it sure, firm, and unshaken to the end.

Ἀκλινῆ. Heb. x. 23. Heb. vi. 19. 1 Thes. i. 3. Heb. x. 36. Heb. vi. 11. Ἐνδείκνυσθαι σπουδήν. Heb. iii. 6, 14. 2 Pet. i. 10.

[1] Τῆς ἀρετῆς ἱδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάροιθεν ἔθηκαν
Ἀθάνατοι, μακρός τε καὶ ὄρθιος ὶμὸς ἐπ' αὐτὴν,
Καὶ τρηχύς.—— *Hes.* Ἔργ. ά.

SERM. L.

Temperance also surely demandeth no small pains[m]; it being no slight business to check our greedy appetites, to shun the enticements of pleasure, to escape the snares of company and example, to support the ill-will and reproaches of those zealots and bigots for vice, who cannot tolerate any nonconformity to their extravagances; but, as St. Peter doth express it, *think it strange, if others do not run with them to the same excess of riot, speaking ill of them for it.*

1 Pet. iv. 4.

What should I speak of meekness, of patience, of humility, of contentedness? Is it not manifest how laborious those virtues are, and what pains are necessary in the obtaining, in the exercise of them? what pains, I say, they require in the voidance of fond conceits, in the suppression of froward humours, in the quelling fierce passions, in the brooking grievous crosses and adversities, in the bearing heinous injuries and affronts?

Thus doth all virtue require much industry, and it therefore necessarily must itself be a great virtue, which is the mother, the nurse, the guardian of all virtues; yea, which indeed is an ingredient and constitutive part of every virtue; for if virtue were easily obtainable or practicable without a good measure of pains, how could it be virtue? what excellency could it have, what praise could it claim, what reward could it expect? God hath indeed made the best things not easily obtainable, hath set them high out of our reach, to exercise our industry in getting them, that we might raise up ourselves to them, that being obtained, they may the more deserve our esteem and his reward.

Lastly, the sovereign good, the last scope of our actions, the top and sum of our desires, happiness itself, or eternal life in perfect rest, joy, and glory; although it be the supreme gift of God, and special boon of divine grace, (τὸ δὲ χάρισμα τοῦ Θεοῦ, *But*, saith St. Paul, *the gift of God's grace is eternal life*;) yet it also by God himself is declared to be the result and reward of industry; for we are

Rom. vi. 23. Eph. ii. 8.

[m] Πάντες ἐξ ἑνὸς στόματος ὑμνῆσιν, ὡς καλὸν μὲν ἡ σωφροσύνη τε καὶ δικαιοσύνη, χαλεπὸν μέν τοι καὶ ἐπίπονον. *Plat. de Rep.* 2.

SERM. L.

commanded *to work out our salvation with fear and trembling*, and to *give diligence in making our calling and election sure* by virtuous practice; and *God*, saith St. Paul, *will render to every man according to his works; to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life;* and, in the close of God's book, it is proclaimed, as a truth of greatest moment, and special point of God's will, *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.* It is plainly industry which climbeth the holy mount; it is industry which taketh *the kingdom of heaven by force;* it is industry which *so runneth as to obtain* the prize, which so fighteth as *to receive the crown*, which so *watcheth* as to secure our everlasting interest to us.

Phil. ii. 12. 2 Pet. i. 10. Rom. ii. 6, 7, 10. vi. 22. Rev. xxii. 14. Heb. xii. 22. Matt. xi. 12. 1 Cor. ix. 24. Jam. i. 12. Matt. xxiv. 42. xxv. 13. Luke xii. 37. Rev. iii. 3.

Thus do the choicest good things, of which we are capable, spring from industry, or depend upon it; and no considerable good can be attained without it. Thus all the gifts of God are by it conveyed to us, or are rendered in effect beneficial to us; for the gifts of nature are but capacities, which it improveth; the gifts of fortune or providence are but instruments, which it employeth to our use; the gifts of grace are the supports and succours of it; and the very gift of glory is its fruit and recompence.

There are, farther, several other material considerations and weighty motives to the practice of this duty which meditation hath suggested to me: but these, in regard to your patience, must suffice at present; the other, together with an application proper to our condition and calling, being reserved to another occasion.

SERMON LI.

OF INDUSTRY IN GENERAL.

Eccles. ix. 10.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.

SERM. LI. Industry, which the divine Preacher in this text recommendeth to us, is a virtue of a very diffusive nature and influence; stretching itself through all our affairs, and twisting itself with every concern we have; so that no business can be well managed, no design accomplished, no good obtained without it. It therefore behoveth us to conceive a high opinion of it, and to enure our souls to the practice of it upon all occasions: in furtherance of which purposes I formerly, not long since, did propound several motives and inducements; and now, proceeding on, shall represent divers other considerations serviceable to the same end.

1. We may consider, that industry is productive of ease itself, and preventive of trouble. It was no less solidly, than acutely and smartly advised by the philosopher Crates[a], *Whether*, said he, *labour be to be chosen, labour; or whether it be to be eschewed, labour, that thou mayest not labour; for by not labouring, labour is not escaped, but is rather pursued;* and St. Chrysostom[b] doth, upon the same consideration, urge industry, because *Sloth*, saith he, *is wont*

[a] Εἴθ' αἱρετὸν ὁ πόνος, πόνει· εἴτε φευκτὸν, πόνει, ἵνα μὴ πονῇς· διὰ γὰρ τὸ μὴ πόνειν οὐ φεύγεται πόνος, τῷ δὲ ἐναντίῳ ᾧ διώκεται. *Crates, Ep.* 4.

[b] Ἡ ἀργία διαφθείρειν ἡμᾶς εἴωθε, καὶ πολὺν παρέχειν τὸν πόνον. *Chrys. in Joh. Orat.* 36.

to spoil us, and to yield us much pain. No man can cozen nature, escaping the labour to which he was born; but rather attempting it, will delude himself, then finding most, when he shunneth all labour. SERM. L.

Sloth indeed doth affect ease and quiet, but by affecting them doth lose them; it hateth labour and trouble, but by hating them doth incur them; it is a self-destroying vice, not suffering those who cherish it to be idle, but creating much work, and multiplying pains unto them; engaging them into divers necessities and straits, which they cannot support with ease, and out of which, without extreme trouble, they cannot extricate themselves: of this the Preacher doth afford us a plain instance; *By much slothfulness*, saith he, *the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through.* A little care taken at first about repairing the house, would have saved its decay and ruin, and consequently the vast charge and trouble, becoming needful to re-edify it: and the like doth happen in most other cases and occurrences of life: idleness commonly doth let slip opportunities and advantages, which cannot with ease be retrieved; it letteth things fall into a bad case, out of which they can hardly be recovered. Eccles. x. 18.

The certain consequences of it (disgrace, penury, want of experience, disobliging and losing friends, with all the like mischiefs) cannot be supported without much disquiet; and they disable a man from redressing the inconveniences into which he is plunged.

But industry, by a little voluntary labour taken in due place and season, doth save much necessary labour afterward, and by moderate care doth prevent intolerable distress; and the fruits of it (wealth, reputation, skill, and dexterity in affairs, friendships, all advantages of fortune) do enable a man to pass his life with great ease, comfort, and delight.

2. Industry doth beget ease, by procuring good habits, and facility of acting things expedient for us to do. By taking pains to-day, we shall need less pains to-morrow; and by continuing the exercise, within a while we shall

M. I. need no pains at all, but perform the most difficult tasks of duty, or of benefit to us, with perfect ease, yea commonly with great pleasure. What sluggish people account hard and irksome (as to rise early, to hold close to study or business, to bear some hardship) will be natural and sweet; as proceeding from another nature, raised in us by use.

Industry doth breed assurance and courage, needful for the undertaking and prosecution of all necessary business, or for the performance of all duties incumbent on us.

No man can quite decline business, or disengage himself from duty, without infinite damage and mischief accruing to himself: but these an industrious man (confiding in this efficacious quality) will set upon with alacrity, and dispatch with facility, his diligence voiding obstacles, and smoothing the way to him; whenas idleness, finding some difficulties, and fancying more, soon dishearteneth and causeth a man to desist from action, rather choosing to crouch under the burden, than by endeavour to carry it through, to discharge himself thereof: whence as to an industrious man things seeming difficult will prove easy, so to a slothful person the easiest things will appear impossible; according to Solomon's observation: *The way*, saith he, *of a slothful man is an hedge of thorns, but the way of the upright is made plain*[c]; whereas a slothful man, being apt to neglect his obligations, is opposed to an upright man, who hath a conscionable regard to them, and is willing to take pains in the discharge of them: so it is declared, that to the one the way is rough and thorny, to the other beaten and expedite.

And again, *The slothful man*, saith he, *doth say, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets*[d]; he is very apt to conceit, or to pretend imaginary difficulties and hazards, and thence to be deterred from going about his

[c] עצל Prov. xv. 19. Ὁδὸι ἀεργῶν ἱτρωμέναι ἀκάνθαις, αἱ δὲ τῶν ἀνδρείων τετριμμέναι.

[d] Prov. xxii. 13. xxvi. 13. Προφασίζεται, καὶ λέγει ὀκνηρὸς, Λέων ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς, ἐν δὲ ταῖς πλατείαις φονευταί.

business, or doing his duty. This consideration St. Chrysostom doth propose, exciting to an earnest pursuit of virtue; because, *There is*, saith he, *nothing so easy, which our great sloth doth not represent very grievous and burdensome; nothing so painful and difficult, which diligence and willingness do not show to be very easy* [e]. SERM. LI.

3. We may consider that industry will sweeten all our enjoyments, and season them with a grateful relish: for as no man can well enjoy himself, or find sound content in any thing, while business or duty lie unfinished on his hand; so when he hath done his best toward the dispatch of his work, he will then comfortably take his ease, and enjoy his pleasure; then his food doth taste savourily, then his divertisements and recreations have a lively gustfulness, then his sleep is very sound and pleasant, according to that of the Preacher, *The sleep of a labouring man is sweet.* Eccles. v. 12. Τοῦ δούλου.

4. Especially those accommodations prove most delightful, which our industry hath procured to us; we looking on them with a special tenderness of affection, as on the children of our endeavour; we being sensible at what costs of care and pain we did purchase them. [f] If a man getteth wealth by fraud or violence, if he riseth to preferment by flattery, detraction, or any bad arts, he can never taste any good savour, or find sound comfort in them; and from what cometh merely by chance, as there is no commendation due, so much satisfaction will not arise. It is the Wise Man's observation, *The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting*, and therefore it cannot be very grateful to him; but, addeth he, *the substance of a diligent man is precious*; that is, what a man compasseth by honest industry, that he is apt highly to prize; he triumpheth in it, and (in St. Paul's sense innocently) Prov. xii. 27. 1 Cor. ix. 15.

[e] Οὐδὲν οὕτως ἐστὶ ῥᾴδιον, ὁ μὴ σφόδρα βαρὺ καὶ ἐπαχθὲς ὁ πολὺς δείκνυσιν ὄκνος ἡμῶν· ὥσπερ ἐπίπονον καὶ ἡ δυσχερὴς, ὁ μὴ λίαν εὔχολον ἡ σπουδὴ καὶ ἡ προθυμία. *Chrys.* tom. vi. *Or.* p. 15, 144.

Τὰ μὲν ῥᾴδια τοὺς ἀμελοῦντας φεύγει, τὰ δὲ χαλεπὰ ἐπιμελείαις ἁλίσκεται. *Plut. de Educ.*

[f] Cui sit conditio dulcis sine pulvere palmæ? *Hor. Ep.* i. 1.

SERM. LI.

boasteth of it; he feeleth a solid pleasure and a pure complacency therein: the manner of getting it doth more please him than the thing itself; as true hunters do love the sport more than the quarry, and generous warriors more rejoice in the victory than in the spoil; for *our soul*, as St. Chrysostom discourseth, *is more affected with those things, for which it hath laboured; for which reason*, addeth he, *God hath mixed labours with virtue itself, that he might endear it to us* g. Yea farther,

5. The very exercise of industry immediately in itself is delightful, and hath an innate satisfaction, which tempereth all annoyances, and even ingratiateth the pains going with it.

The very settlement of our mind on fit objects, or its acquiescence in determinate action, conducing to a good end, whereby we are freed of doubt, distraction, and fastidious listlessness, doth minister content.

The reflection upon our having embraced a wise choice, our proceeding in a fair way, our being in chase of a good purpose, doth breed complacence.

To consider that we are spending our time accountably, and improving our talents to good advantage, (to the service of God, the benefit of our neighbour, the bettering of our own state,) is very cheering and comfortable.

Prov. xiv. 23.

And whereas *in all labour*, as the Wise Man telleth us, *there is profit*, the foresight of that profit affordeth pleasure, the foretasting the good fruits of our industry is very delicious.

1 Cor. ix. 10. Rom. xii. 12. v. 2. Heb. iii. 6. 1 Tim. iv. 10. (Col. i. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 12. 1 John iii. 3. 1 Pet. i. 3. Tit. ii. 13.)

Hope, indeed, doth ever wait on industry: and what is more delightful than hope? This is the incentive, the support, the condiment of all honest labour h; in virtue whereof the husbandman toileth, the merchant trudgeth, the scholar ploddeth, the soldier dareth with alacrity and courage, not resenting any pains, not regarding any hazards, which attend their undertakings: this, the holy apos-

g Περὶ ἐκεῖνα μᾶλλον ἡ ψυχὴ διακεῖται, ὑπὲρ ὧν ἔκαμε· διὰ τοῦτο καὶ πόνος ἀνέμιξεν ἀρετῇ οἰκειῶσαι αὐτῇ ταύτην βουλόμενος. *Chrys. in Joh. Orat.* 36.

h —— ipsa operis difficultate lætus spem segetis de labore metitur. *Apud Aug. Ep.* 142.

tles tell us, did enable them with joy to sustain all their painful work and hazardous warfare; enjoining us also, as to *work with fear*, so to *rejoice in hope*. SERM. LI.

In fine, industry doth free us from great displeasure, by redeeming us from the molestations of idleness, which is the most tedious and irksome thing in the world, racking our soul with anxious suspense and perplexing distraction[i]; starving it for want of satisfactory entertainment, or causing it to feed on its own heart by doleful considerations; infesting it with crowds of frivolous, melancholic, troublesome, stinging thoughts; galling it with a sense of our squandering away precious time, of our slipping fair opportunities, of our not using the abilities and advantages granted us to any profit or fruit: whence St. Chrysostom saith very truly, that *there is nothing more unpleasant, more painful, more miserable, than a man that hath nothing to do. Is not this*, saith he, *worse than ten thousand chains, to hang in suspense, and be continually gaping, looking on those who are present*[k]? Indeed the strictest imprisonment is far more tolerable, than being under restraint by a lazy humour from profitable employment: this enchaineth a man hand and foot, with more than iron fetters: this is beyond any imprisonment; it is the very entombment of a man, quite in effect sequestering him from the world, or debarring him from any valuable concerns therein. And if liberty be ἐξουσία αὐτοπραγίας, *a power of doing what one liketh best;* then is he, who by his sloth is disabled from doing any thing wherein he can find any reasonable satisfaction, the veriest slave that can be; from which slavery industry freeing us, and disposing us to perform cheerfully whatever is convenient, thereby doeth us a great pleasure. Farther,

Otium est vivi hominis sepultura.

6. Let us consider, that industry doth afford a lasting

[i] Otio qui nescit uti plus habet negotii, &c.

Otioso in otio animus nescit quid quidem velit, &c. *Ennius apud Agel.* xix. 10.

[k] Καὶ τί ἀηδέστερον γένοιτ' ἂν ἀνθρώπῳ ἀδὲν ἔχοντος ποιεῖν; τί μοχθηρότερον; τὸ παλαιπωρότερον; μυρίων ὁ χεῖρον αὖτο δεσμῶν, χασμώσθαι καὶ κεχήνεναι διατεντὸς ἐπὶ τῆς ἀγορᾶς καθήμενον, ὁρῶντα τὸς παριόντας. *Chrys. in Act. Or.* 35.

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comfort, deposited in the memory and conscience of him that practiseth it. It will ever, upon his reviewing the passages of his life, be sweet to him to behold in them testimonies and monuments of his diligence; it will please him to consider, that he hath lived to purpose, having done somewhat considerable; that he hath made an advantageous use of his time; that he hath well-husbanded the talents committed to him; that he hath accomplished (in some measure) the intents of God's bounty, and made some return for his excellent gifts. What comfort, indeed, can any man have, yea, how sore remorse must he feel, in reflecting upon a life spent in unfruitful and unprofitable idleness? How can he otherwise than bewail his folly and baseness, in having lived (or rather having only been) in vain; as the shadow and appearance of a man: in having lavished his days, in having buried his talents, in having embezzled his faculties of nature, and his advantages from Providence; in having defeated the good-will of God, and endeavoured no requital to the munificent goodness of his Maker, of his Preserver, his benign Lord and Master, his gracious Saviour and Redeemer? How, without confusion, can he in his mind revolve, that he hath nowise benefited the world, and profited his neighbour, or obliged his friends, or rendered to his country (to the society or community of which he is a member) amends for all the safety and quiet, the support, the convenience, and the pleasure he hath enjoyed under its protection, and in its bosom? that he hath not borne a competent share in the common burdens, or paid a due contribution of his care and labour to the public welfare? How can such a man look inward upon himself with a favourable eye, or pardon himself for so loathsome defaults?

Diu fuit, non diu vixit.

Matt. xxv. 26.

7. Let us consider, that industry doth argue a generous and ingenuous complexion of soul.

It implieth a mind not content with mean and vulgar things, (such as nature dealeth to all, or fortune scattereth about,) but aspiring to things of high worth, and pursuing them in a brave way, with adventurous

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courage, by its own forces, through difficulties and obstacles.

It signifieth in a man a heart, not enduring to owe the sustenance or convenience of his life to the labour or the liberality of others; to pilfer a livelihood from the world; to reap the benefit of other men's care and toil, without rendering a full compensation, or outdoing his private obligations by considerable service and beneficence to the public.

A noble heart will disdain to subsist like a drone upon the honey gathered by others' labour; like a vermin to filch its food out of the public granary; or like a shark to prey on the lesser fry; but will one way or other earn his subsistence: for he that doth not earn, can hardly own his bread, as St. Paul implieth, when he saith, *Them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.* 2 Thess. iii. 12. Τὸν ἑαυτῶν ἄρτον.

Of this generous ingenuity we have a notable instance in that great Apostle himself; which he doth often represent as a pattern to us, professing much complacence therein. He with all right and reason might have challenged a comfortable subsistence from his disciples, in recompense for the incomparable benefits he did confer on them, and of the excessive pains he did endure for their good: this he knew well; but yet did rather choose to support himself by his own labour, than any wise to seem burdensome or troublesome to them: *These hands*, said he, *have ministered to my necessities, and to them that are with me. I have shewed you all things, that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.* This was the practice of him, who was in *labours most abundant*; and such is the genius of every man, who, upon principles of conscience, reason, and honour, is industrious. Of him it may be said, as of Solomon's good housewife, *She seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands; she is like the merchants' ship, she bringeth her food from afar; she looketh well to her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.*

1 Cor. ix. 15. 2 Thess. iii. 9. 1 Cor. ix. 11. 1 Thess. ii. 6. Acts xx. 34, 35. xviii. 3. 1 Thess. ii. 9. 2 Thess. iii. 8. 1 Cor. iv. 12. 2 Cor. xi. 9, 23. Prov. xxxi. 13, 14, 27.

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Sloth is a base quality, the argument of a mind wretchedly degenerate and mean; which is content to grovel in a despicable state; which aimeth at no worthy thing, nor pursueth any thing in a laudable way; which disposeth a man to live *gratis* (precariously) and ingratefully on the public stock, as an insignificant cypher among men, as a burden of the earth, as a wen of any society; sucking aliment from it, but yielding no benefit or ornament thereto.

8. Industry is a fence to innocence and virtue; a bar to all kinds of sin and vice, guarding the avenues of our heart, keeping off the occasions and temptations to vicious practice. When a man is engaged in honest employment, and seriously intent thereon, his mind is prepossessed and filled, so that there is no room or vacancy for ill thoughts, or base designs, to creep in; his senses do not lie open to ensnaring objects; he wants leisure and opportunity of granting audience to the solicitations of sinful pleasure; and is apt to answer them with a *non vacat*[l]; the Devil can hardly find advantage of tempting him, at least many devils cannot get access to him, according to that observation in Cassian, *A working monk is assaulted by one devil, but an idle one is spoiled by numberless bad spirits*[m]. The case of men ordinarily is like to that of Ægisthus,

Ovid de Remed.

——ne nil ageretur, amavit;

rather than do nothing, he was ready to do ill; he not having business to employ his thoughts, wanton desires did insinuate themselves into his heart, and transported him to that disastrous wickedness, which supplied matter to so many tragedies; and the like instance the sacred history suggesteth in King David, who *walking*, it is said, *on the roof of his house*, his mind then roving, and being untacked from honest cares, that temptation seized on him, whereby he was plunged into that woful misdemeanour, which did create to him so much sorrow, did make such a spot in his

2 Sam. xi. 2.

[l] Semper te diabolus inveniat occupatum. *Bern. Form. Hon.* v. cap. 7.

[m] Operans monachus uno dæmone pulsatur, otiosus vero innumeris spiritibus devastatur. *Cass. de Instit.* x. 23.

life, and leave such a blur on his memory; whence yet we may draw some benefit, taking it as a profitable document and warning, how idleness doth expose the best men to danger. SERM. LI.

Idleness is indeed the nursery of sins, which as naturally grow up therein as weeds in a neglected field, or insects in a standing puddle. *Idleness teacheth much evil.* It is the general trap, whereby every tempter assayeth to catch our soul; for the mind being loose from care, Satan is ready to step in with his suggestions, the world presenteth its allurements, fleshly desires rise up; proud, froward, wanton cogitations slip in; ill company doth entice, ill example is regarded, every temptation doth object and impress itself with great advantage and force; men in such a case being apt to close and comply with temptations, even to divert their mind and entertain themselves, to cure their listlessness, to pass their time[n], committing sin for want of better occupation. Hence in places where there is least work, the worst sins do most prevail; and idleness, therefore, was by the Prophet reckoned one of the three great sins of Sodom, parents of the rest: *Behold*, saith Ezekiel, *this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom; pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her:* hence it seldom doth happen in any way of life, that a sluggard and a rakehell do not go together; or that he who is idle is not also dissolute. Ecclus. xxxiii. 27. Ezek. xvi. 49.

9. Particularly, industry doth prevent the sins of vain curiosity, pragmaticalness, troublesome impertinency, and the like pests of common life, into which persons not diligently following their own business will assuredly fall. *We hear*, saith St. Paul to the Thessalonians, *that there are some who walk among you disorderly; working not at all, but are busy-bodies*[o]. It is no wonder, if they did *not work at all*, that they should *walk disorderly;* or that, quite

[n] ——————si non
Intendes animum studiis et rebus honestis,
Invidia vel amore vigil torquebere—— *Hor. Ep.* I. 2.

[o] 2 Thess. iii. 11. Μηδὲν ἐργαζομένους, ἀλλὰ περιεργαζομένους: working nothing, but over-working.

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neglecting their own concerns, they should περιεργάζεσθαι, *over-work*, or be too busy in matters not belonging to them, intruding themselves into the affairs of their neighbours: for there is a natural connection between these things, since every man must be thinking, must be doing, must be saying somewhat, to spend his leisure, to uphold conversation, to please himself, and gratify others, to appear somebody among his companions; to avoid the shame of being quite out of employment: wherefore not having the heart to mind his own affairs, he will take the boldness to meddle with the concerns of other men: if he cannot have the substance, he will set up an idol of business, and seem very active in his impertinency; in order thereto, being curiously inquisitive, and prying into the discourse, actions, and affairs of all men. This men are apt to do in their own defence; and, besides, idleness doth put men into a loose, garish, wanton humour, disposing them, without heed or regard, to meddle with any thing, to prattle at any rate. In fine, whoever hath no work at home, will be gadding to seek entertainment abroad, like those gossips of whom St. Paul saith, *They learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not.* If, indeed, we consider all the frivolous and petulant discourse, the impertinent chattings, the rash censures, the spiteful detractions, which are so rife in the world, and so much poison all conversation, we shall find the main root of them to be a want of industry in men, or of diligent attendance on their own matters; which would so much take up their spirit and time, that they would have little heart or leisure to search into or comment upon other men's actions and concerns.

1 Tim. v. 13.

10. Let us consider, that industry is needful in every condition and station, in every calling and way of life; in all relations, for our good behaviour, and right discharge of our duty in them. Without it we cannot in any state act decently or usefully, either to the benefit and satisfaction of others, or to our own advantage and comfort.

Are we rich? Then is industry requisite for keeping

and securing our wealth, for managing it wisely, for employing it to its proper uses, and best advantages, (in the service of God, in beneficence to our neighbour, in advancing public good;) so that we may render a good account to him who hath entrusted us with the stewardship thereof: industry is very needful to guard us from the temptations and mischiefs to which wealth doth expose us, that it do not prove a treacherous snare, an unwieldy burden, a destructive poison and plague to us, throwing us into pride and vanity, into luxury, into stupidity, into distracting solicitude, into a base, worldly, and earthly temper of heart, into a profane oblivion of God, and of our own souls.

Are we in conspicuous rank of dignity, or in honour and repute among men? Then is industry requisite to keep us fast in that state, to hold us from tumbling from that pinnacle down into extreme disgrace; for then all eyes are upon us, strictly observing what we do, and ready to pass censure on our actions; so that great diligence is necessary to approve ourselves, and shun obloquy. Nothing is more brittle than honour; every little thing hitting on it, is able to break it, and therefore without exceeding care we cannot preserve it. Nothing is more variable or fickle than the opinions of men, (wherein honour consisteth;) it is therefore no easy matter to fix or detain them in the same place.

Vitrea fama. *Hor.* Eccl. x. 1.

Honour cannot live without food or fuel; it must be nourished by worthy actions; without a continual supply of them, it will decay, languish, and pine away: industry therefore is required to keep it; and no less is necessary to use it well, in a due subordination to God's honour, and reference to his service, that, instead of an ornament and convenience, it do not prove a baneful mischief to us; puffing up our minds with vain conceits and complacencies, inclining us to arrogance and contempt of others, tempting us by assuming to ourselves to rob God of his due glory; to decline which evils great care is requisite; we must have a steady ballast, and we must hold the rudder warily, when we carry so great sail.

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On the other hand, are we poor and low in the world; or do we lie under disgrace? Then do we much need industry to shun extremities of want and ignominy; that we be not swallowed up and overwhelmed by need or contempt; to support us under our pressures, to keep up our spirits from dejection and disconsolateness; to preserve us from impious discontentedness and impatience: industry is the only remedy of that condition, enabling us to get out of it, retrieving a competence of wealth or credit; or disposing us to bear it handsomely, and with comfort; so as not to become forlorn or abject wretches.

It is so needful to every condition; and it is so for all vocations; for,

Is a man a governor, or a superior in any capacity? Then what is he but a public servant, doomed to continual labour, hired for the wages of respect and pomp, to wait on his people; in providing for their needs, protecting their safety, preserving their peace and welfare: where is he but on a stage, whereon he cannot well act his part, without vigilant attendance to his charge, and constant activity in performing all the functions thereof? He is engaged in great obligations and necessities of using extreme diligence, both in regard to himself and others. Homer's description of a prince is a good one; *One who hath much people, and many cares committed to him:*

Ὦ λαοὶ τ' ἐπιτετράφαται, καὶ τόσσα μέμηλε.

He must watchfully look to his own steps, who is to guide others by his authority and his example. All his actions require special conduct, not only his own credit and interest, but the common welfare depending thereon. He must heedfully advise what to do, he must diligently execute what he resolveth on. He hath the most ticklish things that can be (the rights and interests, the opinions and humours of men) to manage. He hath his own affections to curb and guide, that they be not perverted by any sinister respects, not swayed by any unjust partiality, not corrupted by flattery or fear. He will find, that to wield power innocently, to brandish the sword of justice

discreetly and worthily, for the maintenance of right, and encouragement of virtue, for the suppression of injury, and correction of vice, is a matter of no small skill or slight care. SERM. LI.

Industry is indeed a quality most proper for persons of high rank and dignity, or of great power and authority; who have special opportunities to employ it in weighty affairs to great advantage; whose undertakings being of vast moment, do need answerable efforts to move and guide them. The industry of a mechanic, or a rustic, acting in a low and narrow sphere, can effect no great matter, and therefore itself need not to be great: but the industry of a prince, of a nobleman, of a gentleman, may have a large and potent influence, so as to render a nation, a county, a town, happy, prosperous, glorious, flourishing in peace, in plenty, in virtue; it therefore for achieving such purposes need be, and should be proportionably great; a small power not being able to move a great weight, nor a weak cause to produce a mighty effect. Wherefore, Cicero recommending Pompey for a public charge, doth reckon these to be the *imperatoriæ virtutes*, qualities befitting a prince, or general, wherein he did excel, *Labour in business, valour in dangers, industry in acting, nimbleness in performance, counsel in providing* [p]. And Alexander the Great, reflecting on his friends degenerating into sloth and luxury, told them, that it was *a most slavish thing to luxuriate, and a most royal thing to labour* [q].

And for those who move in a lower orb of subjection or service, I need not shew how needful industry is for them. Who knoweth not that to be a good subject, doth exact a careful regard to the commands of superiors, and a painful diligence in observing them? that to make a good servant, fidelity and diligence must concur? whereof the first doth suppose the last, it being a part of honesty

[p] Labor in negotio, fortitudo in periculis, industria in agendo, celeritas in conficiendo, consilium in providendo, &c. *Cic. pro lege Manil.*

[q] Δουλικώτατόν ἐστι τὸ τρυφᾶν, βασιλικώτατον δὲ τὸ πονεῖν. *Plut. in Alex.* p. 1262.

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in a servant to be diligent; whence δοῦλε πονηρὲ καὶ ὀκνηρὲ, *O thou wicked and slothful servant*, were in the Gospel well coupled; and the first epithet was grounded on the second, he being therefore wicked, because he had been slothful.

Matt. xxv. 26.

Neither can a man be a true friend, or a good neighbour, or anywise a good relative, without industry disposing him to undergo pains in performing good offices, whenever need doth require, or occasion invite.

In fine, it is palpable, that there is no calling of any sort, from the sceptre to the spade, the management whereof with any good success, any credit, any satisfaction, doth not demand much work of the head, or of the hand, or of both.

If wit or wisdom be the head, if honesty be the heart, industry is the right hand of every vocation; without which the shrewdest insight and the best intention can execute nothing.

A sluggard is qualified for no office, no calling, no station among men; he is a mere nobody, taking up room, pestering and clogging the world.

11. It also may deserve our consideration, that it is industry, whereto the public state of the world, and of each commonweal therein, is indebted for its being, in all conveniences and embellishments belonging to life, advanced above rude and sordid barbarism; yea, whereto mankind doth owe all that good learning, that morality, those improvements of soul, which elevate us beyond brutes.

To industrious study is to be ascribed the invention and perfection of all those arts whereby human life is civilized, and the world cultivated with numberless accommodations, ornaments, and beauties.

All the comely, the stately, the pleasant, and useful works which we do view with delight, or enjoy with comfort, industry did contrive them, industry did frame them.

Industry reared those magnificent fabrics, and those commodious houses; it formed those goodly pictures and statues; it raised those convenient causeways, those bridges, those aqueducts; it planted those fine gardens with vari-

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ous flowers and fruits; it clothed those pleasant fields with corn and grass; it built those ships, whereby we plough the seas, reaping the commodities of foreign regions. It hath subjected all creatures to our command and service, enabling us to subdue the fiercest, to catch the wildest, to render the gentler sort most tractable and useful to us. It taught us from the wool of the sheep, from the hair of the goat, from the labours of the silk-worm, to weave us clothes to keep us warm, to make us fine and gay. It helped us from the inmost bowels of the earth to fetch divers needful tools and utensils.

It collected mankind into cities, and compacted them into orderly societies, and devised wholesome laws, under shelter whereof we enjoy safety and peace, wealth and plenty, mutual succour and defence, sweet conversation and beneficial commerce.

It by meditation did invent all those sciences whereby our minds are enriched and ennobled, our manners are refined and polished, our curiosity is satisfied, our life is benefited [r].

What is there which we admire, or wherein we delight, that pleaseth our mind, or gratifieth our sense, for the which we are not beholden to industry.

Doth any country flourish in wealth, in grandeur, in prosperity? It must be imputed to industry, to the industry of its governors settling good order, to the industry of its people following profitable occupations: so did Cato, in that notable oration of his in Sallust, tell the Roman senate, that it was not by the force of their arms, but by the industry of their ancestors, that commonwealth did arise to such a pitch of greatness. When sloth creepeth in, then all things corrupt and decay; then the public state doth sink into disorder, penury, and a disgraceful condition.

Cat. apud Sallust. in bello Catil.

12. Industry is commended to us by all sorts of examples, deserving our regard and imitation. All nature is a

[r] Ut varias usus meditando extunderet artes
Paullatim, &c. *Virg. Georg.* i.

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copy thereof, and the whole world a glass, wherein we may behold this duty represented to us.

We may easily observe every creature about us incessantly working toward the end for which it was designed, indefatigably exercising the powers with which it is endued, diligently observing the laws of its creation. Even beings void of reason, of sense, of life itself, do suggest unto us resemblances of industry; they being set in continual action toward the effecting reasonable purposes, conducing to the preservation of their own beings, or to the furtherance of common good.

The heavens do roll about with unwearied motion; the sun and stars do perpetually dart their influences; the earth is ever labouring in the birth and nourishment of plants; the plants are drawing sap, and sprouting out fruits and seeds, to feed us and propagate themselves; the rivers are running, the seas are tossing, the winds are blustering, to keep the elements sweet in which we live.

Prov. vi. 6, &c.

Solomon sendeth us to the ant, and biddeth us to *consider her ways*, which *provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.* Many such instructors we may find in nature; the like industrious providence we may observe in every living creature; we may see this running about, that swimming, another flying in purveyance of its food and support.

If we look up higher to rational and intelligent natures, still more noble and apposite patterns do object themselves to us.

Here below every field, every shop, every street, the hall, the exchange, the court itself (all full of business, and fraught with the fruits of industry) do mind us how necessary industry is to us.

If we consult history, we shall there find, that the best men have been most industrious; that all great persons, renowned for heroical goodness, (the worthy Patriarchs, the holy Prophets, the blessed Apostles,) were for this most commendable; that, neglecting their private case, they did undertake difficult enterprises, they did undergo painful labours for the benefit of mankind; they did pass

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their days, like St. Paul, ἐν κόποις καὶ μόχθοις, *in labours* and *toilsome pains*, for those purposes.

2 Cor. xi. 27.

Our great example, the life of our blessed Lord himself, what was it but one continual exercise of labour? His mind did ever stand bent in careful attention, studying to do good. His body was ever moving in wearisome travail to the same divine intent.

Acts x.

If we yet soar farther in our meditation to the superior regions, we shall there find the blessed inhabitants of heaven, the courtiers and ministers of God, very busy and active; they do vigilantly wait on God's throne [s] in readiness to receive and to dispatch his commands; they are ever on the wing, and fly about like lightning *to do his pleasure*. They are attentive to our needs, and ever ready to protect, to assist, to relieve us! Especially, they are diligent guardians and succourers of good men; *officious spirits, sent forth to minister for the heirs of salvation*: so even the seat of perfect rest, is no place of idleness.

Psal. ciii. 21, 22. xxxiv. 7. xci 11. Heb. i. 14.

Yea, God himself, although immoveably and infinitely happy, is yet immensely careful, and everlastingly busy: he rested once from that great work of creation; but yet *My Father*, saith our Lord, *worketh still*; and he never will rest from his works of Providence and of grace. His eyes continue watchful over the world, and his hands stretched out in upholding it. He hath a singular regard to every creature, supplying the needs of each, and *satisfying the desires of all* [t].

Gen. ii. 2. John v. 17. Psal. cxxi. 3. cxxvii. 1. Zech. iv. 10. 2 Chron. xvi. 9. Psal. cxlv. 15, 16. (Prov. v. 21. xv. 3. Psal. xxxiv. 15. Gen. xxxi. 49. Jer. xxxi. 18.)

And shall we alone be idle, while all things are so busy? Shall we keep our hands in our bosom, or stretch ourselves on our beds of laziness, while all the world about us is hard at work in pursuing the designs of its creation? Shall we be wanting to ourselves, while so many things labour for our benefit? Shall not such a cloud of examples stir us to some industry? Not to comply with so universal a practice, to cross all the world, to

[s] Σοὶ δὲ θρόνῳ πυρόεντι παρίστανται πολύμοχθοι
Ἄγγελοι.—— *Orph.*

[t] O tu bone omnipotens, qui sic curas unumquemque nostrum tanquam solum cures, et sic omnes tanquam singulos. *Aug. Conf* iv. 11.

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disagree with every creature, is it not very monstrous and extravagant?

I should close all this discourse with that, at which, in pitching on this subject, I chiefly did aim, an application exhortatory to ourselves, urging the practice of this virtue by considerations peculiar to us as scholars, and derived from the nature of our calling. But the doing this requiring a larger discourse than the time now will allow, I shall reserve to another occasion; adding only one consideration more.

13. Lastly, if we consider, we shall find the root and source of all the inconveniences, the mischiefs, the wants of which we are so apt to complain, to be our sloth; and that there is hardly any of them, which commonly we might not easily prevent or remove by industry. Why is any man a beggar, why contemptible, why ignorant, why vicious, why miserable? Why, but for this one reason, because he is slothful; because he will not labour to rid himself of those evils? What could we want, if we would but take the pains to seek it, either by our industry, or by our devotion? For where the first will not do, the second cannot fail to procure any good thing from him, who giveth *to all men liberally*, and hath promised to supply the defect of our ability by his free bounty; so that if we join these two industries (industrious action, and industrious prayer) there is nothing in the world so good, or so great, of which, if we are capable, we may not assuredly become masters: and even for industry itself, especially in the performance of all our duties toward God, let us industriously pray: even so, *The God of peace sanctify us wholly, and make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight; through our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom forever be all glory and praise.* Amen.

Jam. i. 5.

Δέησις ἐνεργαμένη. Jam. v. 16.

Προσκαρτέρησις. Eph. vi. 18. Rom. xii. 12. Col. iv. 2. 1 Thess. v. 23. Heb. xiii. 21.

SERMON LII.

OF INDUSTRY IN OUR GENERAL CALLING, AS CHRISTIANS.

Rom xii. 11.

Not slothful in business. [a]

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Industry is a very eminent virtue, being an ingredient, or the parent, of all other virtues, of constant use upon all occasions, and having influence upon all our affairs.

For it is in our nature framed; all our powers of soul and body being fitted for it, tending to it, requiring it for their preservation and perfection.

We were designed for it in our first happy state; and upon our lapse thence were farther doomed to it, as the sole remedy of our needs and the inconveniences to which we became exposed. For,

Without it we cannot well sustain or secure our life in the enjoyment of any comfort or convenience; we must work to earn our food, our clothing, our shelter; and to supply every indigency of accommodations, which our nature doth crave.

To it God hath annexed the best and most desirable rewards; success to our undertakings, wealth, honour, wisdom, virtue, salvation; all which, as they flow from God's bounty, and depend on his blessing; so from them

[a] Τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί. Solicitudine non pigri. *Vulg.*

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they are usually conveyed to us through our industry, as the ordinary channel and instrument of attaining them.

It is requisite to us, even for procuring ease, and preventing a necessity of immoderate labour.

It is in itself sweet and satisfactory; as freeing our mind from distraction, and wrecking irresolution: as feeding us with good hope, and yielding a foretaste of its good fruits.

It furnisheth us with courage to attempt, and resolution to achieve things needful, worthy of us, and profitable to us.

It is attended with a good conscience, and cheerful reflections, of having well spent our time, and employed our talents to good advantage.

It sweeteneth our enjoyments, and seasoneth our attainments with a delightful relish.

It is the guard of innocence, and barreth out temptations to vice, to wantonness, to vain curiosity, and pragmaticalness.

It argueth an ingenuous and generous disposition of soul; aspiring to worthy things, and pursuing them in the fairest way; disdaining to enjoy the common benefits, or the fruits of other men's labour, without deserving them from the world, and requiting it for them.

It is necessary for every condition and station, for every calling, for every relation; no man without it being able to deport himself well in any state, to manage any business, to discharge any sort of duty.

To it the world is indebted for all the culture, which advanceth it above rude and sordid barbarism; for whatever in common life is stately, or comely, or useful, industry hath contrived it, industry hath composed and framed it.

It is recommended to us by all sort of patterns considerable; for all nature is continually busy and active in tendency toward its proper designs; heaven and earth do work in incessant motion; every living creature is employed in progging for its sustenance; the blessed spirits are always on the wing in dispatching the commands of

God, and ministering succour to us; God himself is ever watchful, and ever busy in preserving the world, and providing for the needs of every creature. SERM. LII.

The lives of our blessed Saviour, of all the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, the Saints, in this respect have been more exemplary; no virtue being more conspicuous in their practice than industry in performing the hard duties and painful tasks imposed on them for the service of God, and the benefit of mankind.

Such is the virtue upon which I have formerly discoursed in general and at large; but shall now more specially consider, according to St. Paul's prescription, in reference to its most proper matter, *business*, explaining and pressing it accordingly.

Be not *slothful in business*, (that is, in discharge of it,) or *to business*, (that is, to undertake it:) this is the rule; the nature and needfulness whereof we shall declare.

By σπουδὴ, *business*, we may understand any object of our care and endeavours which doth require them, and may deserve them; which by reason of its difficulty cannot well be accomplished or attained without them; and which is productive of some fruit or recompense answerable to them; the which hath *operæ causam*, a need of labour, and *operæ pretium*, some effect worth our pains: if it be not such, it is not a due matter of virtuous and laudable industry.

There are many things, about which men with great earnestness employ themselves, called business, but not deserving that name: there are divers spurious kinds of industry, which may not pretend to commendation, but rather do merit blame; according to that of St. Chrysostom, *Labour which hath no profit, cannot obtain any praise* [b].

There is a κενοσπουδία, a vain industry, and a κακοσπουδία, a naughty industry, both agreeing with genuine virtuous industry in the act, as implying careful and painful acti-

[b] Πένης οὐδὲν κέρδος ἔχων, ἐγκωμίου πάντως ἀπέτυχε. *Chrysost.* tom. v. *Orat.* 64.

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vity, but discording from it in object and design; and consequently in worth and moral esteem.

Aliud agere, to be impertinently busy, doing that which conduceth to no good purpose, is in some respect worse than to do nothing, or to forbear all action; for it is a positive abuse of our faculties, and trifling with God's gifts[c]; it is a throwing away labour and care, things valuable in themselves; it is often a running out of the way, which is worse than standing still; it is a debasing our reason, and declining from our manhood, nothing being more foolish or childish, than to be solicitous and serious about trifles: for who are more busy and active than children? who are fuller of thoughts and designs, or more eager in prosecution of them, than they? But all is about ridiculous toys, the shadows of business, suggested to them by apish curiosity and imitation. Of such industry we may understand that of the Preacher, *The labour of the foolish wearieth every one of them;* for that a man soon will be weary of that labour, which yieldeth no profit, or beneficial return.

Eccles. x. 15.

But there is another industry worse than that, when men are very busy in devising and compassing mischiefs; an industry whereof the Devil affordeth a great instance; for the cursed fiend is very diligent, ever watching for occasions to supplant us, ever plotting methods and means to do harm, ever driving on his mischievous designs with unwearied activity; *going to and fro in the earth; running about as a roaring lion*, looking for prey, and *seeking whom he may devour.*

Luke xxii. 31. 2Cor. ii. 11.

Job i. 7. 1 Pet. v. 8.

And his wicked brood are commonly like him, being

[c] Ἄλλῳ γὰρ ἀδεινὶ φιλοσόφῳ τὸν κινόσπουδον ὁρίζομεν ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις ὄντα πολλάκις, ἢ τῷ τὸν μὲν εἰς ἀνωφελῆ πονεῖν, καὶ ἀδιαφόρως, τὸν δὲ ἕνεκά τῳ τῶν συμφερόντων καὶ λυσιτελῶν. *Plut. de Commun. Not.* p. 1949. edit. Steph.

Σπουδάζειν καὶ πονεῖν παιδιᾶς χάριν ἠλίθιον φαίνεται καὶ λίαν παιδικόν. *Arist. Eth* x. 6.

Ἡ ἐπὶ μικροῖς σπουδὴ μέμψιν φέρει. *Plut. ibid.*

Vid. de Glor. Ath. p. 621.

Οἱ σπουδάζοντες ἐν τοῖς γελοίοις, ἐν τοῖς σπουδαίοις ἥσονται καταγέλαστοι. *Cat. Maj. apud Plut. in Apoph.*

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workers of iniquity [d], οἱ πονηροί, *painful men*, οἱ πανοῦργοι, men that will do all things; who will spare no pains, nor leave any stone unturned, for satisfying their lusts, and accomplishing their bad designs. Psal. vi. 8.

So indeed it is, that as no great good, so neither can any great mischief be effected without much pains; and if we consider either the characters or the practices of those, who have been famous mischief-doers, the pests of mankind and disturbers of the world, we shall find them to have been no sluggards. Catiline, Marius, Stilico, Cæsar, &c.

These two sorts of vain and bad industry the Prophet Isaiah seemeth to describe in those words; *They hatch cockatrice' eggs, and weave the spider's web;* of which expressions one may denote mischievous, the other frivolous diligence in contrivance or execution of naughty or vain designs; and to them both that of the Prophet Hosea may be referred; *They have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind;* guilt, remorse, and punishment being the consequences of both. And of them both common experience doth afford very frequent and obvious instances, a great part of human life being taken up with them. For, Isa. lix. 5. Hos. viii. 7. Eccles. xxxiv. 2. Prov. xxii. 8. Hos. x. 13.

How assiduously intent and eager may we observe men to be at sports! How soon will they rise to go forth to them! With what constancy and patience will they toil in them all the day! How indefatigable are they in riding and running about after a dog or a hawk, to catch a poor beast or silly bird!

How long will men sit poring on their games, dispensing with their food and sleep for it [e].

How long and serious attention will men yield to a wanton play! How many hours will they contentedly sit thereat! What study will men employ on jests and impertinent wit! How earnest will they be to satisfy their vain curiosity!

[d] Ἐργάται τῆς ἀδικίας. Luke xiii. 27.

[e] Συνείρουσι γὰρ οἱ φιλόκυβοι νύκτας ἡμέραις ἄσιτοι καὶ ἄποτοι, καὶ ἡδονὴς ἡδονὴ τεκίσῃ. *Lib. Orat.* 31.

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How in such cases do men forget what they are doing! that sport should be sport [f], not work; to divert and relax us, not to employ and busy us; to take off our minds a little, not wholly to take them up; not to exhaust or tire our spirits, but to refresh and cheer them, that they may become more fit for grave and serious occupations!

Jer. ii. 18. How painful will others be *in hewing them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that will hold no water*; that is, in immoderate pursuit of worldly designs! How studiously will they plod, how restlessly will they trudge, what carking and drudgery will they endure in driving on projects of ambition and avarice! What will not they gladly do or suffer, to get a little preferment, or a little profit! It was a common practice of old, and sure the world is not greatly mended since the Psalmist did thus reflect, *Surely every man walketh in a vain shew; surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.*

Psal. xxxix. 6.

How many vigilant and stout pursuers are there of sensuality and riotous excess; such as those of whom the Prophet speaketh, *Wo unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!*

Isa. v. 11.

How busy (O shame, O misery! how fiercely busy) are some in accomplishing designs of malice and revenge! How intent are some to overreach, to circumvent, to supplant their neighbour! How sore pains will some take to seduce, corrupt, or debauch others! How active will some be in sowing strifes, in raising factions, in fomenting disorders in the world! How many industrious slaves hath the Devil [g], who will spare no pains about any kind of work, which he putteth them to! How many like those of whom the Wise Man saith, *Their feet run to evil*, and are *swift in running to mischief: they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall!*

Prov. i. 16. vi. 18. iv. 16.

[f] Τῷ γὰρ ὄντι παίζοντα δεῖ παίζειν. *Plut.*

[g] Ἐννοήσωμέν τινα ὁ διάβολος ἐπέταξε, πῶς ἐπίπονα, πῶς ἐμίμοχθα, &c. *Chrys.* Ἀνδρ. 16.

Now with all these labourers we may well expostulate in the words of the Prophet; *Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?* SERM. I. Isa. lv. 2.

Such labours are unworthy of men, much less do they beseem Christians.

It becometh us not as rational creatures to employ the excellent gifts of our nature, and noble faculties of our high-born soul, the forces of our mind, the advantages of our fortune, our precious time, our very care and labour, vainly or unprofitably upon any thing base or mean: being that our reason is capable of achieving great and worthy things, we must debase it by stooping to regard toys, we do entremely abuse it by working mishief.

Much more doth it misbecome us as Christians (that is, persons devoted to so high a calling, who have so worthy employments assigned to us, so glorious hopes, so rich encouragements proposed to us for our work) to spend our thoughts and endeavours on things impertinent to our great design, or mainly thwarting it. Eph. i. 18.

The proper matter and object of our industry (those false ones being excluded) is true business; or that which is incumbent on a man to do, either in way of duty, being required by God, or by dictate of reason, as conducing to some good purpose; so that in effect it will turn to account, and finally in advantageous return will pay him for his labour of mind or body; that which the Wise Man did intend, when he advised, *Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might;* whatever thy hand findeth, that is, whatever by divine appointment, (by the command or providence of God,) or which upon rational deliberation, doth occur as matter of our action; comprising every good purpose and reasonable undertaking incident to us. Eccles. ix. 10.

But our business, according to the holy Apostle's intent, may be supposed especially to be the work of our calling; to which each man hath a peculiar obligation; and which therefore is most properly his business, or ἡ πρεσδὴ emphatically, the business allotted to him.

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Now this business, our calling, is double; our general calling, which is common to us all as Christians, and our particular calling, which peculiarly belongeth to us, as placed in a certain station, either in the church or state. In both which vocations that we are much obliged and concerned to be industrious, shall be now my business to declare.

I. As to our general calling, (that *sublime*, that *heavenly*, that *holy* vocation [h],) in which by divine grace, according to the evangelical dispensation, we are engaged, that necessarily requireth and most highly deserveth from us a great measure of industry; the nature and design of it requireth, the fruit and result of it deserveth our utmost diligence; all sloth is inconsistent with discharging the duties, with enjoying the hopes, with obtaining the benefits thereof. For,

It is a state of continual work, and is expressed in terms importing abundant, incessant, intense care and pain; for to be indeed Christians, *We must work out our salvation with fear and trembling;* we must *by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality.* We must *walk worthy of the Lord, to all well pleasing, being fruitful in every good work.* We must *be rich in good works*, and *filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God. We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

Phil. ii. 12. Rom. ii. 7. Col. i. 10. 1 Tim. vi. 18. Phil. i. 11. (John xv. 5, 8, 16. Jam. iii. 17.) Eph. ii. 10.

We have a soul to save, and *are appointed* εἰς περιποίησιν σωτηρίας, *to make an acquist of Salvation.*

1 Thess. v. 9.

We have a mind to improve with virtue and wisdom, qualifying us for entrance into heaven, for enjoyment of God's favour, for conversation with angels.

As Christians we are assumed to be servants of God, and readmitted into his family, from which for our disloyalty we had been discarded; so that as he was our na-

1 Thess. i. 9. Rom. vii. 6. vi. 22. Eph. ii. 19.

[h] Ἡ ἄνω κλῆσις. Phil. iii. 14. Κλῆσις ἐπουράνιος. Heb. iii. 1. Ἁγία κλῆσις. 2 Tim. i. 9. (Eph. i. 18. 2 Thess. i. 11.)

tural Lord, so he is now such also by special grace; who did make us, who doth maintain us, under whose protection and at whose disposal we subsist; whence we are obliged to be faithfully diligent in his service; we must constantly wait upon him in devotional addresses; we must carefully study to know his pleasure; we must endeavour exactly to perform his will, and obey his commands; we must strive to advance his glory, to promote his interest, to improve all talents and advantages committed to us for those purposes; we must, as St. Paul expresseth it, *always abound in the work of the Lord.*

Eph. v. 10. Rom. xii. 2. Luke xi. 28. Matt xxv. 27. 1 Cor. 58.

We must also look upon ourselves as servants of Christ our Redeemer; who by his blood hath purchased us to himself, that we might be *zealous of good works;* performing a service to him, which consisteth in a faithful discharge of manifold duties, and in pursuance of all virtue; with most intent application of mind, with expedite promptitude, with accurate circumspection; *giving all diligence,* as St. Peter speaketh, in *adding* one virtue to another; *being ready,* as St. Paul saith, *to every good work*; and *seeing that we walk circumspectly,* or behave ourselves exactly according to the rules of duty in all our conversation.

Col. iii. 24. Eph. vi. 7. 1 Cor. vii. 23. vi. 20. Tit. ii. 14. 2 Pet. i. 5. Σπουδὴν πᾶσαν παρεισενέγκαντες. Tit. iii. 1. Eph. v. 15. Βλέπετε πῶς ἀκριβῶς—.

This service requireth of us assiduous attendance on works of piety and devotion; that we do *incessantly watch to prayer,* that we *always give thanks,* that we *continually do offer up the sacrifice of praise to God.*

Col. iv. 2. Eph. vi. 18. Rom. xii. 12. 1 Thess. v. 17.

It demandeth from us a continual *labour of charity;* that we *serve one another in love;* that we should as *we have opportunity, work good to all men,* that we should *always pursue good toward one another, and toward all men.*

Luke xviii. 1. 1 Thess. v. 18. Eph. v. 20. Col. iii. 17. Heb. xiii. 15.

It obligeth us *with all our powers to pursue peace with all men,* (which, considering our natural peevishness, pride, and perverseness, is often no easy task, and that we do σπουδάζειν, *studiously endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.*

1 Thess. i. 3. Κόπος τῆς ἀγάπης. Gal v. 13. Δουλεύοντες. Gal. vi. 10. Ἐργαζώμεθα.

It chargeth on us contentedly and patiently to undergo whatever God doth impose of burden or sufferance, so

1 Thess. v. 15.

Ro. xii. 18. Εἰ δυνατόν. Eph. iv. 3. Heb. xii. 14. 2 Tim. ii. 22.

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that *patience have its perfect work;* and it is a crabbed work to bend our stiff inclinations, to quell our refractory passions, to make our sturdy humour buckle thereto.

Jam. i. 4.

It doth exact that we should govern and regulate according to very strict and severe laws all the faculties of our soul, all the members of our body, all internal motions, and all external actions proceeding from us; that we should check our inclinations, curb our appetites, and compose our passions; that we should guard our hearts from vain thoughts and bad desires; that we should bridle our tongues from evil and from idle discourses; that we should order our steps in the straight way of righteousness, not deflecting to the right hand or to the left.

In the discharge of this service how many rough difficulties are there to be surmounted, how many great obstacles to be removed, how many stout oppositions to be encountered, how many potent enemies to be vanquished, how many sore hardships, crosses, and tribulations to be endured!

How shrewd a task must we find it to circumcise our hearts, to mortify our earthly members, to crucify our flesh with its affections and lusts, to pull out our right eyes, and cut off our right hands, to renounce our worldly interests, to hate our nearest relations, to take up and bear our cross, whenever conscience and duty shall call us thereto!

Our calling, therefore, doth require great industry; and the business of it consequently is well represented by those performances, which demand the greatest intention, and laborious activity; it is styled *exercise*, (agonistic and ascetic exercise; γύμναζε σεαυτὸν πρὸς εὐσέβειαν, *Exercise thyself to godliness;* and ἐν τούτῳ ὃς αὐτὸς ἀσκῶ, *Herein I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men;*) *wrestling*, (ἡμῖν ἡ πάλη, *our wrestling is not* only *against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers;*) *running a race*, (*Let us run with patience the race that is set before us: So run that ye may obtain: I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling;*) *a warfare, a combating*, (*War a good war-*

1 Tim. iv. 7.
Acts xxiv. 16.
Heb. xii. 11.
Eph. vi. 12.
Heb. xii. 1.
1 Cor. ix. 24.
Phil. iii. 14.
2 Tim. iv. 7.
1 Tim. i. 18, 19.

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fare, holding faith and a good conscience: Fight the good fight: Thou therefore endure hardship, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ: Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things;) offering *violence, (The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force;) watching, (Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober: Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong: Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.)*

1 Tim. vi. 12. 2 Tim. ii 3. 1 Cor. ix. 25. Matt. xi. 12. 1 Thess. v. 6. 1 Cor. xvi. 13. Matt. xxvi. 41. xxiv. 42. Luke xii. 37. 1 Pet. v. 8. Apoc. iii. 2. xvi 15. Luke xiii. 24.

Hence the precepts importing the general tenor of Christian practice are usually couched in terms implying great sedulity and contention of soul; Ἀγωνίζεσθε, *Strive to enter in at the straight gate: Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest: Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life. Give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end. Wherefore, brethren, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.* Σπουδάσω-μεν. Heb iv 11. Ἐργάζεσθε. John vi. 27. Σπουδάσατε. 2 Pet. i. 10. 1 Pet i. 13. Luke xii. 35. Eph. vi. 14. 2 Pet. iii. 14.

Such is the work of our general calling, and so much industry it challengeth from us; with great reason indeed, for that such work is needful to our happiness, and that our labour will certainly be rewarded therewith.

The work indeed of itself is most worthy to employ us, doth most become us, doth much adorn us, doth best befit our divine extraction and large capacity; is the noblest, the handsomest, the sweetest employment that could take us up: but we have also the greatest inducements and encouragements possible for our industry therein. John iv. 36.

There are, by the divine bounty and mercy, wages assigned abundantly correspondent to our work, yea, infinitely surpassing it; there is πολὺς μισθὸς, *a great* (or a manifold) *hire* for our slender and simple performances; there are several noble prizes highly worth our striving for with our utmost strength and contention of soul. Matt. v. 12.

In recompense thereof we shall assuredly gain even here in this transitory state the special favour and love of God,

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with his constant protection and care for our good[i]; his faithful direction and friendly assistance to guide us and uphold us in all our ways, to bless and prosper our undertakings, to supply us in our needs, and comfort us in our distresses; so that we shall *lack nothing* that is good, that no *evil shall happen to us*, that *all things* shall concur and *co-operate for our benefit.*

Ps xxxiv. 9. lxxxiv. 11. xxxiii. 19. xxxvii. 3, 19. Ps xci. 10. Prov. xii. 21. Rom. viii. 38.

We shall thereby taste the satisfaction of a calm mind, and a sound conscience, quickened by the consolations of the divine spirit; *the peace of God ruling in our hearts, which passeth all understanding.*

Col. iii. 15. Phil. iv. 7.

We shall afterward, when this moment is passed over, and our short day's work dispatched, receive from God's bountiful hand an inconceivable affluence of good things, an eternal permanence of life; undisturbed rest, *indefectible wealth*, ineffable joy, incorruptible glory, *a kingdom unshakable.*

Jam. i. 12. 1 Pet. v. 4. 1 Cor. ix. 25.

He, saith our Lord, *that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting.*

John iv. 36.

To them, saith St. Paul, *who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, God in recompense will bestow eternal life.* And,

Ἀποδώσει— Rom. ii. 6, 7.

I have, saith that blessed labourer of himself, *fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness.*

2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

What more effectual spur or incentive can there be to industry in this business, than to consider that which St. Paul so often doth inculcate; *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same* (a recompense for the same) *he shall receive of the Lord;* and *knowing that* (in consideration of our service done to the Lord) *of the Lord we shall receive the reward of the inheritance?*

Eph. vi. 8. 2 Cor. v. 10. Col. iii. 24.

What exhortation can be more firmly grounded, or strongly backed, than is that of the Apostle, *Therefore,*

1 Cor. xv. 58.

[i] Rom. xiv. 18. He that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

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my brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord?

May it not also much encourage us to industry, to be assured, that not only the kind of our work, but the degree of our labour shall be considered and requited, in just proportion; so that the harder we work, the higher we shall be rewarded; for *to each one*, saith our Lord, *the Son of Man shall render a reward* κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν αὐτοῦ, *according to his performance. Every one*, saith St. Paul, *shall receive* ἴδιον μισθὸν κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον κόπον, *his proper reward according to his proper work;* whence we have reason to observe St. John's advice, *Look to yourselves, that ye lose not those things which ye have gained, but that ye receive a full reward.*

Ἀποδώσει ἑκάστῳ. Matt. xvi. 27. 1 Cor iii. 8. Rev. xxii. 12. ii. 23. Matt. xxv. 21. Luke xix. 12.

To be negligent or slothful in such a case, for want of a little care and pains to forfeit such advantages, what a pity, what a folly is it! Were an opportunity presented, by a little minding our business, and bestirring ourselves, to procure a fair estate, or a good preferment, would not he be deemed mad or sottish, who should sit still, and forego that his advantage? How much more wildness is it to be drowsy and sluggish in this case, thereby losing eternal bliss and glory! Well therefore might the Apostle say, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* How shall we escape, not only the sin and guilt of basest ingratitude toward him that graciously doth offer it, but the imputation of most wretched folly, in being so much wanting to our own interest and welfare?

Μισθὸν πλήρη ἀπολάβητε. 2 John 8. Heb. ii. 3.

Is it not a sad thing, a woful shame, to observe what pains men will throw away upon things of small or no concernment to them? yea, what toil and drudgery they will sustain in the service of Satan, in pursuit of sin, in the gratification of their vanities and lusts?

What pains will a covetous wretch take in scraping for pelf! How will he rack his mind with carking solicitude to get, to keep, to spare it! How will he tire his spirits with restless travail! How will he pinch his carcase for want of what nature craveth! What infamy and

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obloquy will he endure for his niggardly parsimony and sordidness!

How much labour will an ambitious fop undergo for preferment, or vain honour! To how many tedious attendances, to how pitiful servilities will he submit! What sore crosses and disappointments will he swallow! What affronts and indignities will he patiently digest, without desisting from his enterprize!

1 Cor. ix. 25.

How will a man, as St. Paul observed, πάντα ἐγκρατεύεσθαι, endure all painful abstinence and continence, in order to the obtaining a *corruptible crown*, a fading garland of bays, a puff of vain applause!

What diligence will men use to compass the enjoyment of forbidden pleasures! how watchful in catching opportunities, how eager in quest of them will they be! What difficulties will they undertake, what hazards will they incur, what damages and inconveniences will they sustain, rather than fail of satisfying their desires!

What achings of head and heart; what pangs of mind, and gripes of conscience; what anxieties of regret and fear, will every worker of iniquity undergo! So faithful friends hath this vain and evil world; so diligent servants hath the accursed lord thereof; so careful and laborious will men be to destroy and damn themselves. O that we could be willing to spend as much care and pains in the service of our God! O that we were as true friends of ourselves! O that we could be as industrious for our salvation! that is, in the business of our general calling: which having considered, let us proceed to the other business belonging to us, which is,

Chrys. ἀνδρ. ιθ.

II. The business of our particular calling; that in reference whereto St. Paul doth prescribe, *Every man as the Lord hath called him, so let him walk. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called;* let him so abide, as faithfully to prosecute the work, and discharge the duty of it; the doing which otherwhere he termeth πράσσειν τὰ ἴδια, *to do our own business, (working with our hands,)* and enjoineth it in opposition to those two great pests of life, sloth and pragmatical curiosity;

1 Cor. vii. 17, 20.

1 Thess. iv. 11. Eph. iv. 28.

or the neglect of our own, and meddling with other men's affairs.

This the Apostle nameth *our calling*, because we are called or appointed thereto by divine Providence; for he supposeth and taketh it for granted, that to each man in this world God hath assigned a certain station, unto which peculiar action is suited; in which station he biddeth him quietly to abide, till Providence fairly doth translate him, and during his abode therein diligently to execute the work thereof. 1 Cor. vii. 22.

Every man is a member of a double body; of the civil commonwealth, and of the Christian church: in relation to the latter whereof St. Paul telleth us, (and what he saith by parity of reason may be referred likewise to the former,) that *God hath set the members every one in the body, as it pleaseth him;* and as it is in the natural, so it is in every political and spiritual body, every member hath its proper use and function; *All members*, saith St. Paul, *have not* τὴν αὐτὴν πρᾶξιν, *the same office*, or the same work and operation; yet every one hath some work. There is no member designed to be idle or useless, conferring no benefit to the whole; but *the whole body*, saith the Apostle, *fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying itself in love;* each member doth conspire and co-operate to the strength, nourishment, thriving, and welfare of the whole. 1 Cor. xii. 18. Rom. xii. 4. Eph. iv. 16.

Every man (who continueth a man, in his senses, or in any good degree of natural integrity) is by God endowed with competent abilities to discharge some function useful to common good, or at least needful to his own sustenance; to every one some talent is committed, which in subordination to God's service he may improve, to the benefit of the world, God's temporal, or of the church, God's spiritual kingdom. Ἑκάστῳ ὡς ἐμέρισεν Θεός. 1 Cor. vii. 17.

It is plainly necessary, that the greatest part of men should have a determinate work allotted to them, that they may support their life and get their food, without

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being injurious, offensive, or burdensome to others; for their living they must either follow some trade, or they must shark and filch, or they must beg, or they must starve.

And the rest are obliged to do somewhat conducible to public good, that they may deserve to live; for a drone should not be among the bees, nor hath right to devour the honey. If any man doth pretend, or presume, that he hath nothing to do but to eat, to sleep, to play, to laugh, to enjoy his ease, his pleasure, his humour, he thereby doth as it were disclaim a reasonable title of living among men, and sharing in the fruits of their industry; he, in St. Paul's judgment, should be debarred of food, for *this*, saith the holy Apostle, *we commanded you, that if any man would not work, neither should he eat.*

2 Thess. iii. 10.

Such an one in the body of men, what is he but an unnatural excrescence, sucking nutriment from it, without yielding ornament or use? What is he but a wen deforming and encumbering the body, or a canker infesting and corrupting it?

As no man (at least with decency, convenience, and comfort) can live in the world, without being obliged to divers other men for their help in providing accommodations for him; so justice and ingenuity, corroborated by divine sanctions, do require of him, that in commutation he, one way or other, should undertake some pains redounding to the benefit of others.

So hath the great Author of order distributed the ranks and offices of men in order to mutual benefit and comfort, that one man should plough, another thrash, another grind, another labour at the forge, another knit or weave, another sail, another trade, another supervise all these, labouring to keep them all in order and peace; that one should work with his hands and feet, another with his head and tongue; all conspiring to one common end, the welfare of the whole, and the supply of what is useful to each particular member; every man so reciprocally obliging and being obliged; the prince being obliged to the husbandmen for his bread, to the weaver for his clothes,

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to the mason for his palace, to the smith for his sword; those being all obliged to him for his vigilant care in protecting them, for their security in pursuing the work, and enjoing the fruit of their industry.

So every man hath a calling and proper business; whereto that industry is required, I need not much to prove, the thing itself in reason and experience being so clearly evident: for what business can be well dispatched, what success can be expected to any undertaking, in what calling can any man thrive, without industry? What business is there that will go on of itself, or proceed to any good issue, if we do not carefully look to it, steadily hold it in its course, constantly push and drive it forward? It is true, as in nature, so in all affairs, *Nihil movet non motum*, nothing moveth without being moved.

Our own interest should move us to be industrious in our calling, that we may obtain the good effects of being so in a comfortable and creditable subsistence; that we may not suffer the damages and wants, the disappointments and disgraces ensuing on sloth: but the chief motive should be from piety and conscience; for that it is a duty which we owe to God. For God having placed us in our station, he having apportioned to us our task, we being in transaction of our business his servants, we do owe to him that necessary property of good servants, without which fidelity cannot subsist; for how can he be looked on as a faithful servant, who doth not effectually perform the work charged on him, or diligently execute the orders of his master? 1 Cor. iv. 2.

St. Paul doth enjoin servants, that they should *in all things obey their masters*, with conscientious regard to God, as therein performing service to God, and expecting recompense from him: and of princes he saith, that they, in dispensation of justice, enacting laws, imposing taxes, and all political administrations, are *the ministers of God*, προσκαρτεροῦντες, *attending constantly upon this very thing*: and if these extremes, the highest and lowest of all vocations, are services of God; if the highest upon that score be tied to so much diligence, then surely all middle places, Col. iii. 22. Eph. vi. 5. 1 Cor. vii. 22, 23. Rom. xiii. 6.

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upon the same account of conscience toward God, do exact no less.

If he that hath one talent, and he that hath ten, must both improve them for God's interest; then he that hath two, or three, or more, is obliged to the same duty proportionably.

Every one should consider the world as the family of
Eph. iii. 15. that great Paterfamilias, *of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named*, and himself as an officer or servant therein, by God's will and designation constituted in that employment, into which Providence hath cast him; to confer, in his order and way, somewhat toward a provision for the maintenance of himself, and of his fellow-
Matt. xxiv. 45. Luke xii. 42. servants. Of a superior officer our Lord saith, *Who is that faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them their meat in due season?* So the greatest men are as stewards, treasurers, comptrollers, or purveyors; the rest are inferior servants, in their proper rank and capacity.

And he that with diligence performeth his respective duty (be it high and honourable, or mean and contemptible in outward appearance) will please God, as keeping good order, and as being useful to his service; so that, upon
1 Cor. xiv. 33. Matt. xxv. 21. the reckoning, God will say to him, *Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* But he that doeth otherwise (behaving himself carelessly or sluggishly in his business) will offend God, as committing disorder, and as being unprofitable.

He committeth disorder, according to that of St. Paul;
2 Thess. iii. 11. *We hear there are some, which walk among you disorderly, not working at all.* His sentence and doom will be, ac-
Matt. xxv. 26, 30. cording to our Lord, *O thou wicked and slothful servant— Cast the unprofitable servant into utter darkness;* which words are spoken in relation to one, who being a slatterer, or sluggard in his calling, did not improve the special talent intrusted with him for God's service.

In fine, if we are conscientiously industrious in our vo-

cation, we shall assuredly find the blessing of God thereon; and that he thereby will convey good success, comfort, competent wealth, a fair reputation, all desirable good unto us; for as all these things are promised to industry, so the promise especially doth belong to that industry, which a man doth exercise in an orderly course of action in his own way; or rather in God's way, wherein divine Providence hath set him.

An irregular or impertinent laboriousness, out of a man's calling or sphere; a being diligent in other men's affairs, invading their office, (as if I a priest will be trading, a layman preaching,) may not claim the benefit of those promises, or the blessings of industry; but a husbandman, who, with conscientious regard to God, and confidence in him, is painful in tilling his ground, may expect a good crop; a merchant, who (upon the same principle, with the like disposition) earnestly followeth his trade, may hope for safe voyages and good markets; a prince carefully minding his affairs may look for peace and prosperity to his country; a scholar studying hard may be well assured of getting knowledge, and finding truth: all, who with honest diligence constantly do pursue their business, may confidently and cheerfully hope to reap the advantages suitable to it from the favourable blessing of God. So that we have all reason to observe the Apostle's precept, *Not to be slothful in business.*

Prov. x. 4. xiii. 11.

I should apply this doctrine to our own case, urging its practice by considerations peculiar to our vocation: but having already passed the bounds of time, I reserve the doing it to another opportunity.

Now the God of peace sanctify you wholly, and make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ; to whom for ever be all glory and praise. Amen.

1 Thess. v. 23. Heb. xiii. 20.

SERMON LIII.

OF INDUSTRY IN OUR PARTICULAR CALLING, AS GENTLEMEN.

Rom xii. 11.

Not slothful in business.

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I HAVE largely treated upon the duty recommended in this precept, and urged the observance of it in general, at a distance: I now intend more particularly and closely to apply it, in reference to those persons who seem more especially obliged to it, and whose observing it may prove of greatest consequence to public good; the which application may also be most suitable and profitable to this audience. Those persons are of two sorts; the one Gentlemen, the other Scholars.

I. The first place, as civility demandeth, we assign to Gentlemen, or persons of eminent rank in the world, well allied, graced with honour, and furnished with wealth: the which sort of persons I conceive in a high degree obliged to exercise industry in business.

This at first hearing may seem a little paradoxical and strange; for who have less business than Gentlemen? who do need less industry than they? He that hath a fair estate, and can live on his means, what hath he to do, what labour or trouble can be exacted of him, what hath he to think on, or trouble his head with, but how to invent recreations and pastimes to divert himself, and spend his waste leisure pleasantly? Why should not he be allowed to enjoy himself, and the benefits which na-

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ture or fortune have freely dispensed to him, as he thinketh best, without offence? Why may he not say with the rich man in the Gospel, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry?* Is it not often said by the Wise Man, that there is *nothing better under the sun, than that a man should make his soul to enjoy good* in a cheerful and comfortable fruition of his estate? According to the passable notion and definition, *What is a Gentleman but his pleasure?*

Luke xii. 19.

Eccles. ii. 24. iii. 22. v. 18. viii. 15.

If this be true, if a Gentleman be nothing else but this, then truly he is a sad piece, the most inconsiderable, the most despicable, the most pitiful and wretched creature in the world: if it is his privilege to do nothing, it is his privilege to be most unhappy; and to be so will be his fate, if he live according to it; for he that is of no worth or use, who produceth no beneficial fruit, who performeth no service to God, or to the world, what title can he have to happiness? What capacity thereof? What reward can he claim? What comfort can he feel? To what temptations is he exposed! What guilts will he incur!

But in truth it is far otherwise: to suppose that a Gentleman is loose from business, is a great mistake; for indeed no man hath more to do, no man lieth under greater engagements to industry than he.

He is deeply obliged to be continually busy in more ways than other men, who have but one simple calling or occupation allotted to them; and that upon a triple account; in respect to God, to the world, and to himself.

1. He is first obliged to continual employment in respect to God.

He, out of a grateful regard to divine bounty for the eminency of his station, adorned with dignity and repute, for the plentiful accommodations and comforts of his life, for his exemption from those pinching wants, those meaner cares, those sordid entertainments, and those toilsome drudgeries, to which other men are subject, is bound to be more diligent in God's service, employing all the advantages of his state to the glory of his munificent Be-

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nefactor, to whose good providence alone he doth owe them; for *who maketh him to differ* from another? And *what hath he that he did not receive* from God's free bounty?

1 Cor. iv. 7.

In proportion to the bulk of his fortune, his heart should be enlarged with a thankful sense of God's goodness to him; his mouth should ever be filled with acknowledgment and praise; he should always be ready to express his grateful resentment of so great and peculiar obligations.

He should dedicate larger portions of that free leisure which God hath granted to him, in waiting upon God, and constant performances of devotion.

He, in frequently reflecting on the particular ample favours of God to him, should imitate the holy Psalmist, that illustrious pattern of great and fortunate men; saying after him, with his spirit and disposition of soul; *Thou hast brought me to great honour, and comforted me on every side; therefore will I praise thee and thy faithfulness, O God.*

Psal. lxxi. 21.

Psal. xxx. 7. xxxi. 8. xxiii. 5.

Psal. xxx. 12. xvi. 5, 6, 7.

Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountain to stand strong: Thou hast set my feet in a large room: Thou preparest a table before me:—Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over;—to the end that my glory may sing praise unto thee, and not be silent: The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup; thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage; therefore, *I will bless the Lord.*

In conceiving such meditations, his head and his heart should constantly be employed; as also in contriving ways of declaring and discharging real gratitude; asking himself, *What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?* What shall I render to him, not only as a man, for all the gifts of nature; as a Christian, for all the blessings of grace; but as a Gentleman also, for the many advantages of this my condition, beyond so many of my brethren, by special Providence indulged to me?

Ps. cxvi. 12.

He hath all the common duties of piety, of charity, of

sobriety, to discharge with fidelity; for being a Gentleman doth not exempt him from being a Christian, but rather more strictly doth engage him to be such in a higher degree than others; it is an obligation peculiarly incumbent on him, in return for God's peculiar favours, to pay God all due obedience, and to exercise himself in all good works; disobedience being a more heinous crime in him than in others, who have not such encouragements to serve God.

His obedience may be inculcated by those arguments which Joshua and Samuel did use in pressing it on the Israelites; *Only*, said Samuel, *fear the Lord, and serve him in truth; for consider how great things God hath done for you.* And, *I have given you*, saith God by Joshua, *a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not; and ye dwell in them; of the vineyards and oliveyards which ye planted not, do ye eat. Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth.* 1 Sam. xii. 24. Josh. xxiv. 13, 14.

His disobedience may be aggravated, as Nehemiah did that of the Israelites: *They took strong cities and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards and oliveyards, and fruit-trees in abundance; so they did eat and were filled, and became fat; and delighted themselves in thy great goodness; nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs—They have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness, which thou gavest them; neither turned they from their wicked works.* Nehem. ix. 25, &c. (Is. lxiii. 10. Psal. cvi. 6. Jer. ii. 7. Ezek. xvi. 7. 1 Sam. xv. 17. 2 Sam. xii. 7. 1 Kings xvi. 26, 35.)

A Gentleman hath more talents committed to him, and consequently more employment required of him: if a rustic labourer, or a mechanic artisan, hath one talent, a Gentleman hath ten; he hath innate vigour of spirit, and height of courage fortified by use; he hath accomplishment and refinement of parts by liberal education; he hath the succours of parentage, alliance, and friendship; he hath wealth, he hath honour, he hath power and authority, he hath command of time and leisure; he hath so many precious and useful talents entrusted to him, not to be *wrapped up in a napkin*, or *hidden under ground*; Luke xix. 20. Matt. xxv. 25.

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not to be squandered away in private satisfactions; but *for negotiation*, to be put out to use, to be improved in the most advantageous way to God's service. Every talent doth require a particular care and pains to manage it well.

Πραγματεύσασθε. Luke xix. 13.

He particularly is God's steward, entrusted with God's substance for the sustenance and supply of God's family; to relieve his fellow-servants in their need, upon seasonable occasions, by hospitality, mercy, and charitable beneficence: according to that intimation of our Lord, *Who is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler of his household, to give them their portion and meat in due season?* And according to those apostolical precepts, *As every one hath received a gift,* (or special favour) *even so minister the same to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God:* and, *Charge the rich in this world,—that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.*

Ἐργάζεσθαι. Matt. xxv 16, 27.

Matt. xxv. 14.

Παρέδωκε τα ὑπάρχοντα αυτῶ. Luke xii. 42.

Χάρισμα. 1 Pet. iv. 10.

1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.

And he that is obliged to purvey for so many, and so to abound in good works, how can he want business? How can he pretend to a *writ of ease?*

Surely that Gentleman is very blind, and very barren of invention, who is to seek for work fit for him, or cannot easily discern many employments belonging to him, of great concern and consequence.

It is easy to prompt and shew him many businesses, indispensibly belonging to him, as such.

It is his business to minister relief to his poor neighbours, in their wants and distresses, by his wealth. It is his business to direct and advise the ignorant, to comfort the afflicted, to reclaim the wicked, and encourage the good, by his wisdom. It is his business to protect the weak, to rescue the oppressed, to ease those who groan under heavy burdens, by his power; to be such a Gentleman and so employed as Job was; who *did not eat his morsel alone, so that the fatherless did not eat thereof;* who *did not withhold the poor from their desire, or cause the eyes of the widow to fail;* who *did not see any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering;* who *delivered*

Job xxxi. 17, 16.

Job xxxi. 19.

Job xxix. 12.

the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.

It is his business to be hospitable; kind and helpful to strangers; following those noble Gentlemen, Abraham and Lot, who were so ready to invite and entertain strangers with bountiful courtesy. 1 Pet. iv. 9. Heb. xiii. 2. Rom. xii. 13. Gen. xviii. 1. xix. 1.

It is his business to maintain peace, and appease dissensions among his neighbours, interposing his counsel and authority in order thereto: whereto he hath that brave Gentleman, Moses, recommended for his pattern. Exod. ii. 13. Acts vii. 26.

It is his business to promote the welfare and prosperity of his country with his best endeavours, and by all his interest; in which practice the sacred History doth propound divers gallant Gentlemen (Joseph, Moses, Samuel, Nehemiah, Daniel, Mordecai, and all such renowned patriots) to guide him. (Judg. v. 9.)

It is his business to govern his family well; to educate his children in piety and virtue; to keep his servants in good order. Josh. xxiv. 15. Psal. ci.

It is his business to look to his estate, and to keep it from wasting; that he may sustain the repute of his person and quality with decency; that he may be furnished with ability to do good, may provide well for his family, may be hospitable, may have wherewith to help his brethren; for if, according to St. Paul's injunction, a man should *work with his own hands, that he may have somewhat to impart to him that needeth*, then must he that hath an estate be careful to preserve it, for the same good purpose. Μεταδιδόναι. Eph. iv. 28.

It is his business to cultivate his mind with knowledge, with generous dispositions, with all worthy accomplishments befitting his condition, and qualifying him for honourable action; so that he may excel, and bear himself above the vulgar level, no less in real inward worth, than in exterior garb; that he be not a Gentleman merely in name or shew.

It is his business (and that no slight or easy business) to eschew the vices, to check the passions, to withstand the temptations, to which his condition is liable; taking heed Ardua nam res est opibus non tradere mores.

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that his wealth, honour, and power do not betray him unto pride, insolence, or contempt of his poorer brethren; unto injustice or oppression; unto luxury and riotous excess; unto sloth, stupidity, forgetfulness of God, and irreligious profaneness.

It is a business especially incumbent on him to be careful of his ways, that they may have good influence on others, who are apt to look upon him as their guide and pattern.

He should labour and study to be a leader unto virtue, and a notable promoter thereof; directing and exciting men thereto by his exemplary conversation; encouraging them by his countenance and authority; rewarding the goodness of meaner people by his bounty and favour: he should be such a Gentleman as Noah, who *preached righteousness* by his words and works before a profane world.

Such particular affairs hath every person of quality, credit, wealth, and interest, allotted to him by God, and laid on him as duties; the which to discharge faithfully, will enough employ a man, and doth require industry, much care, much pains; excluding sloth and negligence; so that it is impossible for a sluggard to be a worthy Gentleman, virtuously disposed, a charitable neighbour, a good patriot, a good husband of his estate; any thing of that, to which God, by setting him in such a station, doth call him.

Thus is a Gentleman obliged to industry in respect of God, who justly doth exact those labours of piety, charity, and all virtue from him. Farther,

2. He hath also obligations to mankind, demanding industry from him, upon accounts of common humanity, equity, and ingenuity; for,

How can he fairly subsist upon the common industry of mankind, without bearing a share thereof? How can he well satisfy himself to dwell statelily, to feed daintily, to be finely clad, to maintain a pompous retinue, merely upon the sweat and toil of others, without himself rendering a compensation, or making some competent re-

turns of care and pain, redounding to the good of his neighbour?

How can he justly claim, or reasonably expect from the world the respect agreeable to his rank, if he doth not by worthy performances conduce to the benefit of it? Can men be obliged to regard those, from whom they receive no good?

If no Gentleman be tied to serve the public, or to yield help in sustaining the common burdens, and supplying the needs of mankind, then is the whole order merely a burden, and an offence to the world; a race of drones, a pack of cyphers in the commonwealth, standing for nothing, deserving no consideration or regard: and if any are bound, then all are; for why should the whole burden lie on some, while others are exempted?

It is indeed supposed, that all are bound thereto, seeing that all have recompenses publicly allowed to them upon such considerations; divers respects and privileges peculiar to the order, grounded upon this supposition, that they deserve such advantages by conferring notable benefit to the public; the which indeed it were an arrogance to seek, and an iniquity to accept for doing nothing.

It is an insufferable pride for any man to pretend or conceit himself to differ so much from his brethren, that he may be allowed to live in ease and sloth, while the rest of mankind are subject to continual toil and trouble. Moreover,

3. A Gentleman is bound to be industrious for his own sake; it is a duty which he oweth to himself, to his honour, to his interest, to his welfare. He cannot without industry continue like himself, or maintain the honour and repute becoming his quality and state, or secure himself from contempt and disgrace; for to be honourable and slothful are things inconsistent, seeing honour doth not grow, nor can subsist without undertaking worthy designs, constantly pursuing them, and happily achieving

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them; it is the fruit and reward of such actions, which are not performed with ease.

External respect and a semblance of honour, for the sake of public order, may be due to an exterior rank or title: but to pay this, is not to honour the person, but his title; because it is supposed, that men of real worth and use do bear it; or lest, by refusing it to one, the whole order may seem disrespected: but yet true honour, or mental esteem, is not due upon such accounts: nor is it possible to render it unto any person, who doth not by worthy qualities and good deeds appear to merit it.

Nor can a Gentleman without industry uphold his real interests against the attempts of envy, of treachery, of flattery, of sycophantry, of avarice, to which his condition is obnoxious: to preserve his wealth and estate, which are the supports of his quality, he must endure care and pains; otherwise he will by greedy harpies and crafty lurchers be rifled or cozened of his substance; it will of itself go to wreck, and be embezzled by negligence.

He cannot without industry guard his personal welfare from manifold inconveniences, molestations, and mischiefs; idleness itself will be very troublesome and irksome to him. His time will lie upon his hands, as a pestering incumbrance. His mind will be infested with various distractions and distempers; vain and sad thoughts, foul lusts, and unquiet passions will spring up therein, as weeds in a neglected soil. His body will languish and become destitute of health, of vigour, of activity, for want of due exercise. All the mischiefs, which naturally do spring from sloth and stupidity, will seize upon him.

4. Thus, upon various accounts, a Gentleman is engaged to business, and concerned to exercise industry therein: we may add, that indeed the very nature of gentility, or the true notion of a Gentleman, doth imply so much.

For what, I pray, is a Gentleman, what properties hath he, what qualities are characteristical or peculiar to him,

whereby he is distinguished from others, and raised above the vulgar? Are they not especially two, courage and courtesy? which he that wanteth is not otherwise than equivocally a Gentleman, as an image or a carcase is a man; without which, gentility in a conspicuous degree is no more than a vain show, or an empty name: and these plainly do involve industry, do exclude slothfulness; for courage doth prompt boldly to undertake, and resolutely to dispatch great enterprizes and employments of difficulty: it is not seen in a flaunting garb, or strutting deportment; not in hectorly, ruffian-like swaggering or huffing; not in high looks or big words; but in stout and gallant deeds, employing vigour of mind and heart to achieve them: how can a man otherwise approve himself for courageous, than by signalizing himself in such a way?

And for courtesy, how otherwise can it be well displayed than in sedulous activity for the good of men? It surely doth not consist in modish forms of address, or complimental expressions, or hollow professions, commonly void of meaning, or of sincerity; but in real performances of beneficence, when occasion doth invite, and in waiting for opportunities to do good; the which practice is accompanied with some care and pain, adding a price to it; for an easy courtesy is therefore small, because easy, and may be deemed to proceed rather from ordinary humanity, than from gentle disposition; so that, in fine, he alone doth appear truly a Gentleman, who hath the heart to undergo hard tasks for public good, and willingly taketh pains to oblige his neighbours and friends.

5. The work indeed of Gentlemen is not so gross, but it may be as smart and painful, as any other. For all hard work is not manual; there are other instruments of action beside the plough, the spade, the hammer, the shuttle: nor doth every work produce sweat, and visible tiring of body: the head may work hard in contrivance of good designs; the tongue may be very active in dispensing advice, persuasion, comfort, and edification in virtue; a man may bistir himself in *going about to do good:* these

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are works employing the cleanly industry of a Gentleman.

6 In such works it was, that the truest and greatest pattern of gentility that ever was, did employ himself. Who was that? Even our Lord himself; for he had no particular trade or profession: no man can be more loose from any engagement to the world than he was; no man had less need of business or pains-taking than he; for he had a vast estate, being *heir of all things*, all the world being at his disposal; yea, infinitely more, it being in his power with a word to create whatever he would to serve his need, or satisfy his pleasure; omnipotency being his treasure and supply; he had a retinue of angels to wait on him, and minister to him; whatever sufficiency any man can fancy to himself to dispense with his taking pains, that had he in a far higher degree: yet did he find work for himself, and continually was employed in performing service to God, and imparting benefits to men; nor was ever industry exercised upon earth comparable to his.

Isa. liii. 11.

Gentlemen therefore would do well to make him the pattern of their life, to whose industry they must be beholden for their salvation: in order whereto we recommend them to his grace.

SERMON LIV.

OF INDUSTRY IN OUR PARTICULAR CALLING, AS SCHOLARS.

ROM. xii. 11.

Not slothful in business.

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I PROCEED to the other sort of persons, whom we did propound, namely,

II. Scholars; and that on them particularly great engagements do lie to be industrious, is most evident from various considerations.

The nature and design of this calling doth suppose industry; the matter and extent of it doth require industry; the worth of it doth highly deserve industry. We are in special gratitude to God, in charity to men, in due regard to ourselves, bound unto it.

1. First, I say, the nature and design of our calling doth suppose industry: *There is*, saith the divine Preacher, *a man whose labour is in wisdom, in knowledge, and in equity.* Such men are Scholars; so that we are indeed no Scholars, but absurd usurpers of the name, if we are not laborious; for what is a Scholar but one who retireth his person, and avocateth his mind from other occupations and worldly entertainments, that he may σχολάζειν, *vacare studiis*, employ his mind and leisure on study and learning, in the search of truth, the quest of knowledge, the improvement of his reason. Wherefore an idle scholar, a lazy student, a sluggish man of learning, is nonsense.

Eccles. ii. 21.

Ἡ σοφία γραμματέως ἐν εὐκαιρίᾳ σχολῆς.

Eccles. xxxviii. 24.

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What is learning but a diligent attendance to instruction of masters, skilled in any knowledge, and conveying their notions to us in word or writing?

What is study but an earnest, steady, persevering application of mind to some matter, on which we fix our thoughts, with intent to see through it? What in Solomon's
Prov. ii. 2. language are these scholastic occupations, but *inclining the ear, and applying our heart to understanding?* than which commonly there is nothing more laborious, more straining nature, and more tiring our spirits; whence it is well compared to the most painful exercises of body and soul.

The Wise Man, advising men to seek wisdom, the which is the proper design of our calling, doth intimate that work to be like digging in the mines for silver, and like searching all about for concealed treasure; than which there can hardly be any more difficult and painful task:
Prov. ii. 4, 5. *If*, saith he, *thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures, then shalt thou understand.*— Otherwhere he compareth the same work to assiduous watching and waiting, like that of a guard or a client,
Prov. viii. 34. which are the greatest instances of diligence; *Blessed*, saith he, (or Wisdom by him saith, Blessed) *is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.*

Wherefore, if we will approve ourselves to be what we are called, and what we pretend to be; if we will avoid being impostors, assuming a name not due to us, we must not be slothful. Farther,

2. The matter and extent of our business doth require industry from us: the matter of it, which is truth and knowledge; the extent, which is very large and comprehensive, taking in all truth, all knowledge, worthy our study, and useful for the designs of it.

Our business is to find truth; the which, even in matters of high importance, is not easily to be discovered; being as a vein of silver, encompassed with earth and mixed with dross, deeply laid in the obscurity of things, wrapt up in false appearances, entangled with objections,

and perplexed with debates; being therefore not readily discoverable, especially by minds clouded with prejudices, lusts, passions, partial affections, appetites of honour and interest; whence to descry it requireth the most curious observation and solicitous circumspection that can be; together with great pains in the preparation and purgation of our minds toward the inquiry of it.

Our business is to attain knowledge, not concerning obvious and vulgar matters, but about sublime, abstruse, intricate, and knotty subjects, remote from common observation and sense; to get sure and exact notions about which will try the best forces of our mind with their utmost endeavours; in firmly settling principles, in strictly deducing consequences, in orderly digesting conclusions, in faithfully retaining what we learn by our contemplation and study.

And if to get a competent knowledge about a few things, or to be reasonably skilful in any sort of learning, be difficult, how much industry doth it require to be well seen in many, or to have waded through the vast compass of learning, in no part whereof a Scholar may conveniently or handsomely be ignorant; seeing there is such a connection of things, and dependence of notions, that one part of learning doth confer light to another, that a man can hardly well understand any thing without knowing divers other things: that he will be a lame Scholar, who hath not an insight into many kinds of knowledge; that he can hardly be a good Scholar, who is not a general one.

To understand so many languages, which are the shells of knowledge; to comprehend so many sciences, full of various theorems and problems; to peruse so many histories of ancient and modern times; to know the world, both natural and human; to be acquainted with the various inventions, inquiries, opinions, and controversies of learned men; to skill the arts of expressing our mind, and imparting our conceptions with advantage, so as to instruct or persuade others; these are works indeed, which

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will exercise and strain all our faculties (our reason, our fancy, our memory) in painful study.

The knowledge of such things is not innate to us; it doth not of itself spring up in our minds; it is not any ways incident by chance, or infused by grace, (except rarely by miracle;) common observation doth not produce it; it cannot be purchased at any rate, except by that, for which it was said of old, *the gods sell all things*, that is for pains; without which, the best wit and greatest capacity may not render a man learned, as the best soil will not yield good fruit or grain, if they be not planted or sown therein.

Dii laboribus omnia vendunt.

Consider, if you please, what a scholar Solomon was: beside his skill in politics, which was his principal faculty and profession, whereby he did with admirable dexterity and prudence manage the affairs of that great kingdom, *judging his people, and discerning what was good and bad;* accurately dispensing justice; settling his country in a most flourishing state of peace, order, plenty, and wealth; largely extending his territory; so that his wisdom of this kind was famous over the earth: beside, I say, this civil wisdom, he had an exquisite skill in natural philosophy and medicine; for *He spake of trees*, or plants, *from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes.*

1 Kings iii. 9.

1 Kings iv. 20, 25. x. 27.

1 Kings iv. 21, &c.

1 Kings x. 6, 24.

1 Kings iv. 33.

He was well versed in mathematics; for it is said, *Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east-country, and all the wisdom of Egypt;* the wisdom of which nations did consist in those sciences. And of his mechanic skill he left for a monument the most glorious structure that ever stood on earth.

1 Kings iv. 30.

He was very skilful in poetry and music; for he did himself *compose above a thousand songs;* whereof one yet extant declareth the loftiness of his fancy, the richness of his vein, and the elegancy of his style.

1 Kings iv. 32.

He had great ability in rhetoric; according to that in Wisdom, *God granteth me to speak as I would;* and that

Wisd. vii. 15.

in Ecclesiastes, *The Preacher sought to find out acceptable words*; a great instance of which faculty we have in that admirable prayer of his composure at the dedication of the Temple. Eccles. xii. 10. 1 Kings viii.

He did wonderfully excel in ethics; concerning which he *spake three thousand proverbs*, or moral aphorisms; and *moreover*, saith Ecclesiastes, *because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yea, he gave good heed, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs*; the which did contain a great variety of notable observations, and useful directions for common life, couched in pithy expressions. 1 Kings iv. 32. Eccles. xii. 9.

As for theology, as the study of that was the chief study to which he exhorteth others (as to the *head*, or principal part, *of wisdom*,) so questionless he was himself most conversant therein; for proof whereof he did leave so many excellent theorems and precepts of divinity to us. Prov. ii. 5, &c.

In fine, there is no sort of knowledge to which he did not apply his study; witness himself in those words, *I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven.* Eccles. i. 13.

Such a Scholar was he; and such if we have a noble ambition to be, we must use the course he did; which was first in his heart to prefer wisdom before all worldly things; then to pray to God for it, or for his blessing in our quest of it; then to use the means of attaining it, diligent searching and hard study; for that this was his method he telleth us; *I*, saith he, *applied my heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things.* Eccles. vii. 25.

Such considerations shew the necessity of industry for a Scholar. But,

3. The worth, and excellency, and great utility, together with the pleasantness of his vocation, deserving the highest industry, do superadd much obligation thereto.

We are much bound to be diligent out of ingenuity, and in gratitude to God, who by his gracious providence hath assigned to us a calling so worthy, an employment

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so comfortable, a way of life no less commodious, beneficial, and delightful to ourselves, than serviceable to God, and useful for the world.

If we had our option and choice, what calling could we desire before this of any whereto men are affixed? How could we better employ our mind, or place our labour, or spend our time, or pass our pilgrimage in this world, than in scholastical occupations?

It were hard to reckon up, or to express, the numberless great advantages of this calling: I shall therefore only touch some, which readily fall under my thought, recommending its value to us.

It is a calling, the design whereof conspireth with the general end of our being; the perfection of our nature in its endowments, and the fruition of it in its best operations.

It is a calling, which doth not employ us in bodily toil, in worldly care, in pursuit of trivial affairs, in sordid drudgeries; but in those angelical operations of soul, the contemplation of truth, and attainment of wisdom; which are the worthiest exercises of our reason, and sweetest entertainments of our mind; the most precious wealth, and most beautiful ornaments of our soul; whereby our faculties are improved, are polished and refined, are enlarged in their power and use by habitual accessions: the which are conducible to our own greatest profit and benefit, as serving to rectify our wills, to compose our affections, to guide our lives in the ways of virtue, to bring us unto felicity.

Prov. ii. 4, 10, 11.

It is a calling, which, being duly followed, will most sever us from the vulgar sort of men, and advance us above the common pitch; enduing us with light to see farther than other men, disposing us to affect better things, and to slight those meaner objects of human desire, on which men commonly dote; freeing us from the erroneous conceits and from the perverse affections of common people. It is said, διπλᾶν ὁρῶσιν οἱ μαθόντες γράμματα, *men of learning are double-sighted:* but it is true, that in many cases they see infinitely farther than a vulgar sight

doth reach. And if a man by serious study doth acquire a clear and solid judgment of things, so as to assign to each its due weight and price; if he, accordingly, be inclined in his heart to affect and pursue them; if from clear and right notions of things, a meek and ingenuous temper of mind, a command and moderation of passions, a firm integrity, and a cordial love of goodness do spring, he thereby becometh another kind of thing, much different from those brutish men (beasts of the people) who blindly follow the motions of their sensual appetite, or the suggestions of their fancy, or their mistaken prejudices. SERM. LIV.

It is a calling, which hath these considerable advantages, that, by virtue of improvement therein, we can see with our own eyes, and guide ourselves by our own reasons, not being led blindfold about, or depending precariously on the conduct of others, in matters of highest concern to us; that we are exempted from giddy credulity, from wavering levity, from fond admiration of persons and things, being able to distinguish of things, and to settle our judgments about them, and to get an intimate acquaintance with them, assuring to us their true nature and worth; that we are also thereby rescued from admiring ourselves, and that over-weening self-conceitedness, of which the Wise Man saith, *The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason.* Prov. xxvi. 16.

It is a calling, whereby we are qualified and enabled to do God service; to gratify his desires, to promote his honour, to advance his interests; to render his name glorious in the world, by teaching, maintaining, and propagating his truth; by persuading men to render their due love, reverence, and obedience to him; than which we can have no more honourable or satisfactory employment; more like to that of the glorious and blessed spirits.

It is a calling, the due prosecution whereof doth ingratiate us with God, and procureth his favour; rendering us fit objects of his love, and entitling us thereto in regard to

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our qualities, and recompence of our works: for *God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom:* and, *So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.*

Wisd. vii. 28. Psal. v. 5. Prov. iii. 4.

It is a calling, whereby, with greatest advantage, we may benefit men, and deserve well of the world; drawing men to the knowledge and service of God, reclaiming them from error and sin, rescuing them from misery, and conducting them to happiness; by clear instruction, by faithful admonition, by powerful exhortation. And what can be more noble, than to be the lights of the world, the guides of practice to men, the authors of so much good, so egregious benefactors to mankind?

It is a calling most exempt from the cares, the crosses, the turmoils, the factious jars, the anxious intrigues, the vexatious molestations of the world; its business lying out of the road of those mischiefs, wholly lying in solitary retirement, or being transacted in the most innocent and ingenuous company.

It is a calling least subject to any danger or disappointment; wherein we may well be assured not to miscarry or lose our labour; for the merchant, indeed, by manifold accidents may lose his voyage, or find a bad market; the husbandman may plough and sow in vain: but the student hardly can fail of improving his stock, and reaping a good crop of knowledge; especially if he study with a conscientious mind, and pious reverence to God, imploring his gracious help and blessing.

It is a calling, the industry used wherein doth abundantly recompense itself, by the pleasure and sweetness which it carrieth in it; so that the more pains one taketh, the more delight he findeth, feeling himself proportionably to grow in knowledge, and that his work becometh continually more easy to him.

It is a calling, the business whereof doth so exercise as not to weary, so entertain as not to cloy us; being not (as other occupations are) a drawing in a mill, or a nauseous tedious repetition of the same work; but a continued progress toward fresh objects; our mind not being

staked to one or a few poor matters, but having immense fields of contemplation, wherein it may everlastingly expatiate, with great proficiency and pleasure [c]. SERM. LIV.

It is a calling, which doth ever afford plentiful fruit, even in regard to the conveniences of this present and temporal state; the which sufficiently will requite the pains expended thereon: for if we be honestly industrious, we shall not want success; and succeeding we shall not want a competence of wealth, of reputation, of interest in the world: for concerning wisdom, which is the result of honest study, the Wise Man telleth us, *Riches and honour are with her, yea, durable riches and righteousness: Length of days are in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour: Exalt her, and she shall promote thee; she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her; she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.* In common experience the wealth of the mind doth qualify for employments, which have good recompences annexed to them; and neither God nor man will suffer him long to want, who is endowed with worthy accomplishments of knowledge. It was a ridiculous providence in Nero, that if he should chance to lose his empire, he might live by fiddling: yet his motto was good; and Dionysius, another tyrant, found the benefit of it; τὸ τεχνίον πᾶσα γαῖα τρέφει, he that hath any good art, hath therein an estate, and land in every place; he is secured against being reduced to extremity of any misfortune: *Wisdom*, saith the Wise man, *is a defence, and money is a defence; but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it.* Money is a defence, of which fortune may bereave us; but wisdom is beyond its attacks, being a treasure seated in a place inaccessible to external impressions.

Prov. viii. 18. iii. 16. iv. 8, 9. Eccl. vii. 12.

And as a learned man cannot be destitute of substance; so he cannot want credit, having such an ornament, than which none hath a more general estimation; and which can be of low rate only among that sort of folk, to whom

Prov. xii. 8. A man shall be commended according to his wisdom.

[c] Γηράσκω δ' ἀεὶ πολλὰ διδασκόμενος.

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Solomon saith, *How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?—and fools hate knowledge?* It is that which recommendeth a man in all company, and procureth regard, every one yielding attention and acceptance to instructive, neat apposite discourse, (that which the Scripture calleth *acceptable, pleasant, gracious words;*) men think themselves obliged thereby by receiving information and satisfaction from it; and accordingly *Every man*, saith the Wise Man, *shall kiss his lips that giveth a right answer;* and—*for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend;* and, *the words of a wise man's mouth are gracious.* It is that, an eminency wherein purchaseth lasting fame, and a life after death, in the good memory and opinion of posterity: *Many shall commend his understanding; and so long as the world endureth, it shall not be blotted out: his memorial shall not depart away, and his name shall live from generation to generation.* A fame no less great, and far more innocent, than acts of chivalry and martial prowess; for is not Aristotle as renowned for teaching the world with his pen, as Alexander for conquering it with his sword? Is not the one far oftener mentioned than the other? Do not men hold themselves much more obliged to the learning of the philosopher, than to the valour of the warrior? Indeed the fame of all others is indebted to the pains of the scholar, and could not subsist but with and by his fame: *Dignum laude virum musa vetat mori;* learning consecrateth itself and its subject together, to immortal remembrance.

Prov. i. 22, 7. Prov. xxii. 17. Prov. xxiv. 26. Prov. xxii. 11. Eccles. x. 12. Ecclus. xxxix. 9.

It is a calling that fitteth a man for all conditions and fortunes; so that he can enjoy prosperity with moderation, and sustain adversity with comfort,: he that loveth a book will never want a faithful friend, a wholesome counsellor, a cheerful companion, an effectual comforter. By study, by reading, by thinking, one may innocently divert and pleasantly entertain himself, as in all weathers, so in all fortunes.

In fine, it is a calling, which Solomon, who had curiously observed and exactly compared and scanned, by reason and by experience, all other occupations and ways

of life, did prefer above all others; and we may presume would sooner have parted with his royal state, than with his learning; for *Wisdom*, saith he, *is the principal thing*, *therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding;* and *Then I saw*, (then, that is, after a serious disquisition and discussion of things, I saw) *that wisdom exceedeth folly* (that is, knowledge excelleth ignorance) *as light excelleth darkness.*

Prov. iv. 7.

Eccles. ii. 13.

These things and much more may be said of learning in general; but if more distinctly we survey each part, and each object of it, we shall find, that each doth yield considerable emoluments and delights; benefit to our soul, advantage to our life, satisfaction to our mind.

The observation of things, and collection of experiments, how doth it enrich the mind with ideas, and breed a kind of familiar acquaintance with all things, so that nothing doth surprise us, or strike our mind with astonishment and admiration! And if our *eye be not satisfied with seeing*, *nor our ear filled with hearing*, how much less is our mind satiated with the pleasures of speculating and observing that immense variety of objects subject to its view!

Eccles. i. 8.

The exercise of our mind in rational discursiveness about things in quest of truth; canvassing questions, examining arguments for and against; how greatly doth it better us, fortifying our natural parts, enabling us to fix our thoughts on objects without roving, inuring us to weigh and resolve, and judge well about matters proposed; preserving us from being easily abused by captious fallacies, gulled by specious pretences, tossed about with every doubt or objection started before us!

Invention of any kind, (in discerning the causes of abstruse effects, in resolving hard problems, in demonstrating theorems, in framing composures of witty description, or forcible persuasion,) how much doth it exceed the pleasure of hunting for any game, or of combating for any victory! Do any man's children so much please him, as these creatures of his brain?

The reading of books, what is it, but conversing with

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the wisest men of all ages and all countries, who thereby communicate to us their most deliberate thoughts, choicest notions, and best inventions, couched in good expression, and digested in exact method?

And as to the particular matters or objects of study, all have their use and pleasure. I shall only touch them.

The very initial studies of tongues and grammatical literature are very profitable and necessary, as the inlets to knowledge, whereby we are enabled to understand wise men speaking their sense in their own terms and lively strain, whereby especially we are assisted to drink sacred knowledge out of the fountains, the divine oracles.

Luther would not part with a little Hebrew he had for all the Turkish empire.

Rhetoric, or the art of conveying our thoughts to others by speech with advantages of clearness, force, and elegancy, so as to instruct, to persuade, to delight the auditors; of how great benefit is it, if it be well used! How much may it conduce to the service of God, and edification of men! What hath been a more effectual instrument of doing good, and working wonders, not only in the world, but in the church? How many souls have been converted from error, vanity, and vice, to truth, soberness, and virtue, by an eloquent Apollos, a Basil, a Chrysostom!

Ἀνὴρ λόγιος, καὶ δυνατός. Acts xviii. 24.

The perusal of history, how pleasant illumination of mind, how useful direction of life, how sprightly incentives to virtue doth it afford! How doth it supply the room of experience, and furnish us with prudence at the expence of others, informing us about the ways of action, and the consequences thereof by examples, without our own danger or trouble! How may it instruct and encourage us in piety, while therein we trace the paths of God in men, or observe the methods of divine Providence, how the Lord and Judge of the world in due season protecteth, prospereth, blesseth, rewardeth innocence and integrity; how he crosseth, defeateth, blasteth, curseth, punisheth iniquity and outrage; managing things with admirable

temper of wisdom, to the good of mankind, and advancement of his own glory! SERM. LIV.

The mathematical sciences, how pleasant is the speculation of them to the mind! How useful is the practice to common life! How do they whet and excite the mind! How do they inure it to strict reasoning, and patient meditation!

Natural philosophy, the contemplation of this great theatre, or visible system presented before us; observing the various appearances therein, and inquiring into their causes; reflecting on the order, connection, and harmony of things; considering their original source, and their final design: how doth it enlarge our minds, and advance them above vulgar amusements, and the admiration of those petty things, about which men cark and bicker! How may it serve to work in us pious affections of admiration, reverence, and love toward our great Creator, whose *eternal divinity is clearly seen*, whose *glory is declared*, whose transcendent perfections and attributes of immense power, wisdom, and goodness are conspicuously displayed, whose particular kindness toward us men doth evidently shine in those his works of nature! Rom. i. 20. Psal. xix. 1. Psal. viii.

The study of moral philosophy, how exceedingly beneficial may it be to us, suggesting to us the dictates of reason, concerning the nature and faculties of our soul, th chief good and end of our life, the way and means of attaining happiness, the best rules and methods of practice; the distinctions between good and evil, the nature of each virtue, and motives to embrace it; the rank wherein we stand in the world, and the duties proper to our relations: by rightly understanding and estimating which things we may know how to behave ourselves decently and soberly toward ourselves, justly and prudently toward our neighbours; we may learn to correct our inclinations, to regulate our appetites, to moderate our passions, to govern our actions, to conduct and wield all our practice well in prosecution of our end; so as to enjoy our being and conveniences of life in constant quiet and peace, with tranquillity and satisfaction of mind!

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But especially the study of theology, how numberless, unexpressible advantages doth it yield! For,

It enlighteneth our minds with the best knowledge concerning the most high and worthy objects, in order to the most happy end, with the firmest assurance.

It certainly and perfectly doth inform us concerning the nature and attributes, the will and intentions, the works and providence of God.

It fully declareth to us our own nature, our original, our designed end, our whole duty, our certain way of attaining eternal life and felicity.

It exactly teacheth us how we should demean ourselves in all respects piously toward God, justly and charitably toward our neighbour, soberly toward ourselves; without blame in the world, with satisfaction of our conscience, with assured hope of blessed rewards.

It proposeth those encouragements, and exhibiteth assurances of those helps, which serve potently to engage us in all good practice.

It setteth before us a most complete and lively pattern of all goodness; apt most clearly to direct, most strongly to excite, most obligingly to engage us thereto; especially instructing and inclining to the practice of the most high and hard duties, meekness, humility, patience, self-denial, contempt of all worldly vanities.

1 Pet. i. 12. Tit. iii. 4.

It discovereth those sublime mysteries and stupendous wonders of grace, whereby God hath demonstrated an incomprehensible kindness to mankind, and our obligation to correspondent gratitude.

It representeth manifold arguments and incentives to love God with the most intense affection, to confide in him with most firm assurance, to delight in him continually *with joy unspeakable*; which are the noblest, the sweetest, the happiest operations of our soul.

2 Cor. iv. 18.

It reareth our hearts from vain thoughts, and mean desires concerning these poor, transitory, earthly things, to contemplations, affections, and hopes toward objects most excellent, eternal, and celestial.

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It engageth us to study the book of God, the book of books, the richest mine, of most excellent knowledge, containing infallible oracles of truth, and heavenly rules of life; *which are able to make us wise to salvation, and perfect to every good work.* (2 Tim. iii. 15.) Psal. xix. 10.

And how can we otherwise be so well employed, as in meditation about such things? What occupation doth nearer approach to that of the blessed angels? What heaven is there upon earth like to that of constantly feasting our minds and hearts in the contemplation of such objects? Especially considering that this study doth not only yield private benefit to ourselves in forwarding our own salvation, but enableth us by our guidance and encouragement to promote the eternal welfare of others, and by our endeavours to people heaven, according to that exhortation of St. Paul pressing on Timothy this study with diligence: *Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.* 1 Tim. iv. 16.

So considerable is each part of learning, so extremely profitable are some parts of it. Indeed the skill of any liberal art is valuable, as a handsome ornament, as an harmless divertisement, as an useful instrument upon occasions; as preferable to all other accomplishments and advantages of person or fortune, (beauty, strength, wealth, power, or the like;) for who would not purchase any kind of such knowledge at any rate; who would sell it for any price; who would not choose rather to be deformed or impotent in his body, than to have a misshapen and weak mind; to have rather a lank purse, than an empty brain; to have no title at all, than no worth to bear it out; if any would, he is not of Solomon's mind; for of wisdom (by which he meaneth a comprehension of all knowledge, divine and human; into which the knowledge of natural things, of mathematics, of poetry, are reckoned ingredients) he saith, *The merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold; she is more pre-* 1 Kings iv. 29— Prov. ii. 14. viii. 11.

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cious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Her fruit is better than gold, yea than fine gold; and her revenue than choice silver.

Prov. viii. 19. xvi. 16. xx. 15. iv. 7.

Now then, considering all these advantages of our calling, if we by our negligence or sluggishness therein do lose them, are we not very ingrateful to God, who gave them, as with a gracious intent for our good, so with expectation that we should improve them to his service? If God had allotted to us the calling of rustics, or of artificers, we had been impious in not diligently following it; but we are abominably ingrateful in neglecting this most incomparably excellent vocation.

Are we not extremely defective to ourselves, if indulging a wretched humour of laziness we will not enjoy those sweet pleasures, nor embrace those great profits to which God in mercy calleth us?

Prov. xix. 8.

If Solomon said true, *He that getteth wisdom loveth his own soul, he that keepeth understanding shall find good;* how little friends are we to ourselves, how neglectful of our own welfare, by not using the means of getting wisdom!

Prov. xv. 14.

The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge, saith Solomon; what a fool then is he that shunneth it! who, though it be his way, and his special duty to seek it, yet neglecteth it; choosing rather to do nothing, or to do worse.

And do we not deserve great blame, displeasure, and disgrace from mankind, if, having such opportunities of qualifying ourselves to do good, and serve the public, we by our idleness render ourselves worthless and useless?

How, being slothful in our business, can we answer for our violating the wills, for abusing the goodness, for perverting the charity and bounty of our worthy founders and benefactors, who gave us the good things we enjoy, not to maintain us in idleness, but for supports and encouragements of our industry? how can we excuse ourselves from dishonesty, and perfidious dealing, seeing that we are admitted to these enjoyments under condition, and upon confidence (confirmed by our free promises, and

most solemn engagements) of using them according to their pious intent, that is, in a diligent prosecution of our studies, in order to the service of God, and of the public?

Let every Scholar, when he mispendeth an hour, or sluggeth on his bed, but imagine that he heareth the voice of those glorious kings, or venerable prelates, or worthy gentlemen, complaining thus, and rating him: Why, sluggard, dost thou against my will possess my estate? why dost thou presume to occupy the place due to an industrious person? why dost thou forget, or despise thy obligations to my kindness? thou art an usurper, a robber, or a purloiner of my goods, which I never intended for such as thee; I challenge thee of wrong to myself, and of sacrilege toward my God, to whose service I devoted those his gifts to me.

How reproachful will it be to us, if that expostulation may concern us, *Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?* Prov. xvii. 16.

If to be a dunce or a bungler in any profession be shameful, how much more ignominious and infamous to a Scholar to be such? from whom all men expect, that he should excel in intellectual abilities, and be able to help others by his instruction and advice.

Nothing surely would grate on the heart of one, that hath a spark of ingenuity, of modesty, of generous good nature, than to be liable to such an imputation.

To avoid it, therefore, (together with all the guilt and all the mischiefs attending on sloth.) let each of us, in God's name, carefully mind his business; and let the grace and blessing of God prosper you therein. *Amen.*

SERMON LV.

THE UNSEARCHABLENESS OF GOD'S JUDGMENTS.

ROM. xi. 33.

How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

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THESE words are the close of a disputation, wherein St. Paul was engaged with the advocates of Judaism, concerning God's providence toward his ancient people, in rejecting the greatest part of them, upon their refusal to embrace the Christian doctrine; and in admitting the Gentile world to favour, upon its compliance with the overture thereof proposed in the Gospel. In this proceeding those infidels could not discern God's hand, nor would allow such a dispensation worthy of him, advancing several exceptions against it: God, said they, having espoused and consecrated us to himself; having to our fathers, in regard to their piety, made so absolute promises of benediction on their posterity; having consequently endowed us with such privileges and choice pledges of his favour; having taken so much pains with us, and performed so great things in our behalf; having so long avowed, supported, and cherished us; how can it well consist with his wisdom, with his justice, with his fidelity, with his constancy, thus instantly to abandon and repudiate us? Doth not this dealing argue his former affections to have been misplaced? Doth it not implead his

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ancient covenant and law of imperfection? Doth it not supplant his own designs, and unravel all that he for so many ages hath been doing? upon such occasions did this dispensation appear very strange and scandalous to them: but St. Paul, being infallibly assured of its truth, doth undertake to vindicate it from all misprisions, rendering a fair account of it, and assigning for it many satisfactory reasons, drawn from the general equity of the case, from the nature of God, his attributes, and his relations to men; from the congruity of this proceeding to the tenour of God's providence, to his most ancient purposes, to the true intent of his promises, to his express declarations and predictions; to the state of things in the world, and the pressing needs of all mankind: such reasons (I say, which I have not time more explicitly to relate) doth the Apostle produce in favour of this great dispensation; the which did suffice to clear and justify it from all their objections; yet notwithstanding, after that he had steered his discourse through all these rocks, he thought it safe to cast anchor; winding up the contest in this modest intimation, that whatever he could say, might not perhaps exhaust the difficulty, or void all scruple; that therefore in this, and in all such cases, for entire satisfaction, we should have recourse to the incomprehensible wisdom of God, who frequently in the course of his providence doth act upon grounds, and ordereth things in methods, transcending our ability to discover or trace: to consider some causes and reasons of which incomprehensibility, and to ground thereon some practical advices, will be the scope of my discourse: the reasons may be these:

1. As the dealings of very wise men sometimes are founded upon maxims, and admit justifications, not obvious nor penetrable by vulgar conceit; so may God act according to rules of wisdom and justice, which it may be quite impossible by our faculties to apprehend, or with our means to descry.

As there are natural modes of being and operation, (such as God's necessary subsistence, his production of

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things from nothing, his eternity without succession, his immensity without extension, his prescience without necessitation of events, his ever acting, but never changing; and the like,) so there may be prudential and moral rules of proceeding far above our reach; so God himself telleth us: *As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* Some of them we may be uncapable to know, because of our finite nature; they being peculiar objects of divine wisdom, and not to be understood by any creature: for as God cannot impart the power of doing all things possible, so may he not communicate the faculty of knowing all things intelligible; that being indeed to ungod himself, or to deprive himself of his peerless supremacy in wisdom; hence is he styled *the only wise God;* hence he is said to *dwell in light inaccessible;* hence he *chargeth the angels with folly;* hence the most illuminate seraphims do veil their faces before him.

Isa. lv. 9.

1 Tim. i. 17. Rom. xvi. 27. Jude 25. 1 Tim. vi. 16.

Other such rules we may not be able to perceive from the meanness of our nature, or our low rank among creatures: for beneath omniscience there being innumerable forms of intelligence, in the lowest of these we sit, one remove from beasts; being endowed with capacities suitable to that inferior station, and to those meaner employments, for which we were designed and framed; whence our mind hath a pitch, beyond which it cannot soar; and things clearly intelligible to more noble creatures, moving in a higher orb, may be dark and unexplicable to us: *As an angel of God, so is my lord the king, to discern good and bad,* was an expression importing this difference, how those glorious creatures do overtop us in intellectual capacities.

Job iv. 18. Isa. vi. 2.

Ps. ciii. 20. 2 Pet. ii. 11.

2 Sam. xiv. 17, 20. xix. 27.

Also divers notions not simply passing our capacity to know, we are not yet in condition to ken, by reason of our circumstances here, in this dark corner of things, to which we are confined and wherein we lie under many disadvantages of attaining knowledge. He that is shut up in a close place, and can only peep through chinks, who standeth in a valley, and hath his prospect inter-

cepted, who is encompassed with fogs, who hath but a dusky light to view things by, whose eyes are weak or foul, how can he see much or far; how can he discern things remote, minute, or subtile, clearly and distinctly? Such is our case; our mind is pent up in the body, and looketh only through those clefts by which objects strike our sense; its intuition is limited within a very small compass; it resideth in an atmosphere of fancy, stuffed with exhalations from temper, appetite, passion, interest; its light is scant and faint, (for sense and experience do reach only some few gross matters of fact; light infused, and revelation imparted to us, proceed from arbitrary dispensation, in definite measures;) our ratiocination consequently from such principles must be very short and defective; nor are our minds ever thoroughly sound, or pure and defecate from prejudices; hence no wonder, that now we are wholly ignorant of divers great truths, or have but a glimmering notion of them, which we may and hereafter shall come fully and clearly to understand; so that even Apostles, the secretaries of heaven, might say, *We know in part, and we prophecy in part; we now see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.* 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 12.

In fine, those rules of equity or expedience, which we in our transactions with one another do use, (being derived from our original inclinations to like some good things, or from notions stamped on our soul when God made us according to his image, from common experience, from any kind of rational collection, from the prescription of God's word,) if they be applied to the dealings of God, will be found very incongruous, or deficient; the case being vastly altered, from that infinite distance in nature and state between God and us; and from the immense differences which his relations toward us have from our relations to one another.

Wherefore, in divers inquiries about Providence, to which our curiosity will stretch itself, it is impossible for us to be resolved; and launching into them, we shall soon get out of our depth, so as to swim in dissatisfaction, or to sink into distrust: Why God made the world at such

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an instant, no sooner or later; why he made it thus, not exempt from all disorder; why he framed man (the prince of visible creatures) so fallible and frail, so prone to sin, so liable to misery: why so many things happen offensive to him, why his gifts are distributed with such inequality? Such questions we are apt to propound and to debate; but the resolution of them our mind perhaps was not made to apprehend, nor in its most elevate condition shall attain it: however, in this state we by no means can come at it; it at least being kept close from us among those things, of which it is said, *the secret things belong unto the Lord our God*, in distinction from others, about which it is added, *but those that are revealed belong unto us, and to our children for ever.*

Deut. xxix. 29.

In such cases the absolute will, the sovereign authority, the pure liberality of God do supply the place of reasons; sufficient, if not to satisfy the minds of men fondly curious, yet to stop the mouths of those who are boldly peremptory: the which are alleged, not with intent to imply that God ever acteth unaccountably, or without highest reason, but that sometimes his methods of acting are not fit subjects of our conception or discussion; for otherwhile God appealeth to the verdict of our reason; when the case is such that we can apprehend it, and the apprehension of it may conduce to good purposes.

Rom. ix. 20. Isa. xlv. 9. Gen. xviii. 25. Ezek. xviii. 25 Isa. v. 3.

2 As the standing rules of God's acting, so the occasional grounds thereof are commonly placed beyond the sphere of our apprehension.

God is obliged to prosecute his own immutable decrees; *working all things*, as the Apostle saith, *according to the counsel of his own will;* which how can we anywise come to discover? Can we climb up above the heaven of heavens, and there unlock his closet, rifle his cabinet, and peruse the records of everlasting destiny, by which the world is governed? No; *Who knoweth his mind, or hath been his counsellor? Who*, saith the Prophet, *hath stood in the counsel of the Lord; or hath perceived and heard his word?*

Eph. i. 11. Rom. xi. 34. Isa. xl. 13. Jer. xxiii. 8 Wisd ix. 13.

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He doth *search the hearts, and try the reins of men;* he doth *weigh their spirits,* and *their works;* he doth *know their frame,* he doth *understand their thoughts afar off*[a]; he perceiveth their closest intentions, their deepest contrivances, their most retired behaviours; he consequently is acquainted with their true qualifications, capacities, and merits: unto which he most justly and wisely doth accommodate his dealings with them; the which therefore must often thwart the opinions and expectations of us, who are ignorant of those particulars, and can only view the exterior face or semblance of things: for (as Samuel, in the case of preferring David before his brethren, did say) *God seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart.* 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

God also hath a perfect foresight of contingent events; he seeth upon what pin each wheel moveth, and with what weight every scale will be turned; he discerneth all the connections, all the entanglements of things, and what the result will be upon the combination, or the clashing of numberless causes; in correspondence to which perceptions he doth order things consistently and conveniently; whereas we being stark blind, or very dim-sighted in such respects, (seeing nothing future, and but few things present,) cannot apprehend what is fit and feasible; or why that is done, which appeareth done to us. Isa. xlv. 11.

God observeth in what relations, and what degrees of comparison, (as to their natures, their virtues, their consequences,) all things do stand, each toward others; so poising them in the balance of right judgment, as exactly to distinguish their just weight and worth: whereas we cannot tell what things to compare, we know not how to put them into the scale, we are unapt to make due allowances, we are unable to discern which side doth overweigh: in the immense variety of objects our knowledge

[a] Prov. xvi. 2. Isa. xxvi. 7. 1 Sam. ii. 3. Psal. ciii. 14. cxxxix. 2. lxiv. 6. Job xiv. 16.

Ἡμεῖς μὲν γὰρ μόνα ὁρῶμεν τὰ πράγματα· ὁ δὲ τῶν ὅλων Θεὸς, καὶ τῶν ταῦτα ὁρώντων ἐπίσταται τὸν σκοπὸν, καὶ τούτῳ μᾶλλον, ἢ τοῖς ἔργοις δικάζων ἐκφέρει τὴν ψῆφον. *Theod. Ep.* 3.

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doth extend to few things eligible, nor among them can we pick out the best competitors for our choice; hence often must we be at great losses in scanning the designs, or tracing the footsteps of Providence.

3. We are also incapable thoroughly to discern the ways of Providence from our moral defects, in some measure common to all men; from our stupidity, our sloth, our temerity, our impatience, our impurity of heart, our perverseness of will and affections: we have not the perspicacity to espy the subtile tracks and secret reserves of divine wisdom; we have not the industry, with steady application of mind, to regard and meditate on God's works; we have not the temper and patience to wait upon God, until he discover himself in the accomplishment of his purposes;

Matt. v. 8. we have not that *blessed purity of heart*, which is requisite to the *seeing God* in his special dispensations; we have not that rectitude of will and government of our passions, as not to be scandalized at what God doeth, if it thwarteth our conceit or humour: such defects are observable in the best men; who therefore have misapprehended, have disrelished, have fretted and murmured at the proceedings of God: we might instance in Job, in David, in Elias, in Jonah, in the holy Apostles themselves, by whose speeches and deportments in some cases, it may appear how difficult

Job x. 4. it is for us, who have *eyes of flesh*, as Job speaketh, and hearts too never quite freed of carnality, to see through, or fully to acquiesce in the dealings of God.

It is indeed a distemper incident to us, which we can hardly shun, or cure, that we are apt to measure the equity and expedience of things according to our opinions and passions: affecting consequently to impose on God our silly imaginations as rules of his proceeding, and to constitute him the executioner of our sorry passions: what we conceit fit to be done, that we take God bound to perform; when we feel ourselves stirred, then we presume God must be alike concerned: to our apprehensions every slight inconvenience is a huge calamity, every scratch of fortune is a ghastly wound; God therefore, we think,

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should have prevented it, or must presently remove it; every pitiful bauble, every trivial accommodation is a matter of high consequence, which if God withhold, we are ready to clamour on him, and wail as children for want of a trifle. Are we soundly angry, or inflamed with zeal? then *fire must come down from heaven*, then thunderbolts must fly about, then nothing but sudden woe and vengeance are denounced: Are we pleased? then showers of blessings must descend on the heads, then floods of wealth must run into the laps of our favourites, otherwise we are not satisfied; and scarce can deem God awake, or mindful of his charge. We do beyond measure hate or despise some persons, and to those God must not afford any favour, any mercy, any forbearance, or time of repentance; we excessively admire or dote on others, and those God must not touch or cross: if he doth not proceed thus, he is in danger to forfeit his authority: he must hardly be allowed to govern the world, in case he will not square his administrations to our fond conceit, or froward humour: hence no wonder, that men often are stumbled about Providence; for God will not rule according to their fancy or pleasure, (it would be a mad world if he should,) neither indeed could he do so if he would, their judgments and their desires being infinitely various, inconsistent, and repugnant. Again,

Luke ix. 54.

4. The nature of those instruments which divine Providence doth use in administration of human affairs, hindereth us from discerning it: it is an observation among philosophers, that the footsteps of divine wisdom are, to exclusion of doubt, far more conspicuous in the works of nature, than in the management of our affairs [b]; so that some who by contemplation of natural apearances were convinced of

[b] Nam cum dispositi quæssissem fœdera mundi,
Præscriptosque mari fines ———
———tunc omnia rebar
Consilio firmata Dei ———
Sed cum res hominum tanta caligine volvi
Adspicerem ———
———rursus labefacta cadebat
Religio, &c. *Claud. in Ruf.* 1.

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God's existence, and his protection of the world, (whence could not doubt but that an immense wisdom had erected the beautiful frame of heaven and earth, had ranged the stars in their order and courses, had formed the bodies and souls of animals, had provided for the subsistence and propagation of each species, had settled and doth uphold the visible world in its so comely and convenient state, that even such men,) reflecting on the course of human transactions, have staggered into distrust, whether a divine wisdom doth sit at the helm of our affairs; many thence hardly would admit God to be concerned in them, but supposed him to commit their conduct to a fatal swinge, or a causual fluctuation of obvious causes: one great reason of this difference may be, that whereas the instruments of divine power in nature are in themselves merely passive, or act only as they are acted by pure necessity, (as a pen in writing, or a hammer in striking,) being thence determinate, uniform, constant, and certain in their operation; whenever there any footsteps of counsel, any tendency to an end, and deviation from the common tracks of motion do appear, such effects cannot reasonably be imputed merely to natural causes, but to a superior wisdom, wielding them in such a manner, and steering them to such a mark: but the visible engines of Providence in our affairs are self-moving agents, working with knowledge and choice; the which, as in themselves they are indeterminate, irregular, and uncertain; so they are capable to be diversified in numberless unaccountable ways, according to various representations of objects, or by influence of divers principles inclining to judge and choose differently: temper, humour, passion, prejudice, custom, example, together with contingencies of occasion, (depending on like principles in adjacent free causes,) do move, singly or combinedly, in ways so implicate, to the production of so various events, that nothing hardly can fall out, which may not with some plausible colour of reason be derived from some one of those sources, or from a complication of them: nothing can appear so uncouth or extravagant,

Diod. Sic. l. xv. p. 482.

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which may not be fathered on some fetch of wit, or some hit of fancy, or some capricio of humour, or some transport of passion, or some lucky advantage, or on divers of those conspiring; whence in accounting for the reason of such events, men deem they may leave out providence as superfluous; especially considering, that usually disorders and defects only imputable to man's will, do accompany and further such events.

For instance, what other cause would many think needful to assign for the conveyance of Joseph into Egypt, than the envy of his brethren; for Shemei's reviling David, than his base malignity; for David's numbering the people, than his wanton pride; for Jeroboam's revolt, than his unruly ambition; for Job's being robbed, than the thievish disposition of the Arabs; for his being diseased, than a redundance of bad humours; for our Lord's suffering, than the spiteful rage of the Jewish rulers and people; together with the treacherous avarice of Judas, and the corrupt easiness of Pilate? These events all of them are ascribed to God's hand and special ordination; but men could not see or avow it in them: what need, will men ever say, in such cases to introduce God'said, when human means suffice to achieve the feat? Gen. xlv. 5. l. 20. Psal. cv. 17. 2 Sam. xvi. 10. xxiv. 1. 1 Kings xii. 15, 24. Job i. 15. &c. Acts ii. 23. iv. 28.

5. Indeed, as in nature, the influences of heaven, and of inferior causes, so commonly in the production of these events, divine and human agency are so knit and twisted one with the other, that it is not easy to discriminate them, so as to sever the bounds of common and special Providence; or to discern what God performeth by natural instruments, what by superior efficacy; when the balance turneth from our inclinations, when it is cast from a grain thrown in by divine interposition; the management of these affairs being a concert, wherein God's wisdom beareth one part, man's free-will playeth another[c]; fortune and occasion also do strike in; we not seeing the first, are prone to ascribe all the harmony to the last, which are most obvious and visible.

[c] Θεὸς μὲν πάντα, καὶ μετὰ Θεὸν τύχη καὶ καιρὸς τὰ ἀνθρώπινα κυβερνῶσι ξύμπαντα. *Mar. Tyr. diss.* 3. *e. Plot.*

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6. The more apt we are to do thus, because the manner of divine efficacy is ever very soft and gentle: God disposeth things *fortiter et suaviter;* so as effectually to perform what he designeth, but in the most sweet and easy way; his providence doth not hurry along like an impetuous rumbling torrent, but glideth on as a smooth and still current, with an irresistible but imperceptible force carrying things down therewith; without much ado, without any clatter, by a nod of his head, by a whisper of his mouth, by a turn of his hand, he doth effect his purposes; winding up a close spring, he setteth the greatest wheels in motion; and thrusting in an insensible spoke, he stoppeth the greatest wheels in their career; injecting a thought, exciting an humour, presenting an occasion, insinuating a petty accident, he bringeth about the most notable events. He doth so *fashion the hearts of men*, so *manage their hands*, so *guide their steps*, that even they who are acted by him cannot feel the least touch upon them. For, *the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of waters; he turneth it wheresoever he will;* that is, by secret pipes, by obscure channels, God conveyeth the minds and wills of greatest persons (the chief engines of his providence) unto such points of resolution as he pleaseth, so that they seem to flow thither of their own accord, without any exterior direction or impulse: hence do his most effectual operations slip by us without making impression on our minds, which are wont to apprehend things, as with a gross palpability they do incur the senses, so that the Preacher, comparing the methods of Providence with the most occult proceedings in nature, might well say, *As thou knowest not the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child; so thou knowest not the works of God, who maketh all.* Again,

Wisd. viii 1 σὺ δὲ ὡς ἰσχύος καὶ χρηστῶς.

Θεῦ τινος ἐμβάλλοντος εἰς νοῦν ἀνθρώπῳ. *Plut. Timol.*

Psal. xxxiii. 15. Isa. xli. 13. xlii. 6. Prov. xvi. 9. xx. 24. Jer. x. 23. Job xxxiii. 14. xxiii. 28. Prov. xxi. 1.

Eccles. xi. 5.

7. God, in his progress toward the achievement of any design, is not wont to go in the most direct and compendious ways, but commonly windeth about, and taketh a large compass, enfolding several other coincident purposes, some whereof may be no less considerable, than is

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that, which we deem most necessary, and affect to see dispatched: but this course seemeth tedious to us, who have not the wit to perceive that complexion of ends, nor the temper to wait for the completion of them. If God, when we seem to need, doth not instantly appear in our favour and succour; if he doth not presently vindicate truth and right; if he doth not nip wicked designs in the bud, and repress the first onsets of outrageous violence; if for a while he suffereth the *tabernacles of robbers to prosper*, and *iniquity to lift up its horn;* then he is in a slumber, quite unmindful or insensible of us; then he turneth aside his face, or doth behold what passeth as an unconcerned spectator; then he standeth aloof, unready to help us; then doth he hold off his hand, not meddling in our affairs: in such cases we are apt to cry out, *Estis ubi? O superi!* [d] *How long, O Lord, wilt thou forget; how long wilt thou hide thy face? Lord, how long wilt thou look on? Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord? why standest thou afar off? why withdrawest thou thy hand? Pluck it out of thy bosom: Return, O Lord, how long?* Such are our prayers, such our expostulations; so is our blind impatience prone to muse and mutter; not considering how many good designs God is carrying on in a calm and steady pace, by well measured steps, all which, in due season, when they are ripe for accomplishment, shall undoubtedly be effected; for, *The Lord*, as St. Peter saith, *is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering toward all men;* that is, he certainly will express his faithful benignity toward good men, yet so as also to extend his merciful patience toward others; he so will tender the interests of some, as concurrently to procure the welfare of all, and accordingly will time his proceedings, allowing the leisure and opportunities requisite thereto: he can, although we cannot, *wait to be gracious;* for as in him there are no passions to precipitate action;

Sil. Ital.

(Jer. xxiii. 20.) 2 Pet. iii. 9, 10.

Isa. xxx. 18.

[d] Psal. xiii. 1. lxxxix. 46. xc. 13. lxxiv. 10. xliv. 24. lv. 1. xciv. 3. xxxv. 17. xliv. 23. xxxv. 23. vii. 6. lxxiv. 11. x. 1. xc. 13. vi. 4. vii. 7. lxxx. 14. xxii. 1. xi. 19. xxxviii. 2. lxxi. 12. Vid. Hab. i. 2.

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so to him there are no sensible differences of time, *one day being with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.*

8. Again, God (as is the property of every wise agent) is wont to act variously, according to the state and circumstances of things, or to the dispositions and capacities of persons: so as to do the same thing for different ends, and different things for the same end; to apply one instrument to several uses, and by several instruments to work out one purpose: so he afflicteth good men out of love, for trial and improvement of their virtues, bad men in displeasure, to illustrate his power and justice on them; he encourageth and blesseth the one, he punisheth and curseth the other with prosperity; he reclaimeth both from error and sin by either of those methods, as their temper and their circumstances do require. Whence it is very difficult for us ever from the kind of accidents befalling men, to divine how far God is conerned in them, or to what particular scope they are aimed; so that well might the Preacher, upon a careful observation of such occurrences, establish this rule, *No man knoweth love or hatred* (that is, the special regard of God toward men) *by all that is before them;* because, *all things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.* Farther,

Eccles. ix. 1, 2.

9. There are different ends which Providence, in various order and measure, doth pursue, which we, by reason of our dim insight and short prospect, cannot descry: God, as the universal and perpetual governor of the world, in his dispensation of things, respecteth not only the good of this or that person, of one nation or one age; but often in some degree waving that, or taking care for it in a less remarbable way, hath a provident regard to the more extensive good of a whole people, of the world, of posterity; as he did order his friend Abraham to wander in a strange land for the benefit of his seed; Joseph to be sold, calumniated, and fettered for the preservation of his family; our Lord to suffer those grievous things for the redemption of mankind; the Jews to be rejected for

Hab. iii. 6.

the salvation of the Gentiles: in such cases purblind men, observing events to cross particular and present ends, but not being aware how conducible they may prove to general, remote, and more important designs, can hardly be satisfied how God should be concerned in them; the present, or that which lieth adjacent just under our nose, is all that we can or will consider; and therefore must be ill judges of what is done by all-provident wisdom.

10. Again, God permitteth things, bad in their own nature, with regard to their instrumental use and tendency; for that often the worst things may be ordinable to the best ends; things very bitter may work pleasant effects; upon the wildest stock divine husbandry can ingraft most excellent fruit; sin really, and suffering reputedly, are the worst evils, yet from them much glory to God and great benefit to men do accrue; even from the most wicked act that ever was committed, from the most lamentable event that ever did happen, fruits admirably glorious and immensely beneficial did spring; yet usually so blind are we as to be offended at such things, and from them to raise exceptions against Providence.

11. Also the expediency of things to be permitted or crossed, doth frequently consist, not in themselves singly taken, as particular acts or events, but in their conjunction, or reference to others, with which they may become subservient toward a common end; so that divers things in themselves extremely bad may by combination or collision engender good effects; and thence prove fit weapons or tools of Providence; as the most deadly poisons may be so mixed, that curbing one another's force, they may constitute a harmless mass, sometimes a wholesome medicine: but we poring on the simple ingredients, and not considering how they may be tempered, or how applied by a skilful hand, can hardly deem the toleration of them congruous to wisdom. Farther,

12. That Providence sometimes is obscure and intricate, may be attributed to the will of God, upon divers good

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accounts designing it to be such: *Verily*, saith the Prophet, *thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.*

Isa. xlv. 15. Ps. lxxxix. 46.

God commonly doth not intend to exert his hand notoriously; for that whereas every special interposition of his hand is in effect a miracle, (surmounting the natural power or thwarting the ordinary course of inferior causes,) it doth not become him to prostitute his miraculous power, or to exert it otherwise than upon singular occasions, and for most weighty causes: it is not conformable to the tenour of his administrations to convince men against their will, or by irresistible evidence to wring persuasion from stubborn or stupid minds; but to exercise the wisdom, and to prove the ingenuity of well-disposed persons, who upon competent intimations shall be capable to spell out, and forward to approve his proceedings.

13. He will not glare forth in discoveries so bright as to dazzle, to confound our weak sight; therefore he veileth his face with a cloud, and wrappeth his power in some obscurity; therefore *clouds and darkness are round about him: he maketh darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him is dark waters and thick clouds of the sky.*

Hab. iii. 4. Psal. xcvii. 2. xviii. 11.

14. He meaneth thereby to improve and exalt our faith, being the less seen, that he may be the more believed; faith never rising higher than when it doth soar to objects beyond our sight; when we can approve God's wisdom and justice in occurences surmounting our conceit; when we can rely upon God's word and help, although the stream of his proceedings seemeth to cross our hopes.

15. It is fit also that God many times designedly should act in ways surpassing our apprehension, and apt to baffle or puzzle our reason, that he may appear God indeed, infinitely transcending us in perfection of wisdom and justice; or that we, comprehending the reason of his actings, may not imagine our wisdom comparable, our justice commensurate to his; yea, that we in those respects

do exceed him; for *That*, as Tertullian discourseth, *which may be seen, is less than the eyes that survey it; that which may be comprehended, is less than the hands that grasp it; that which may be valued, is less than the senses which rate it*[e]. It is God's being inestimable that makes him worthily esteemed[f]; his being incomprehensible rendereth him adorable.

16. The obscurity of Providence doth indeed conciliate an awful reverence toward it; for darkness naturally raiseth a dread of invisible powers; we use to go on tremblingly, when we cannot see far about us; we regard none so much as those, whose wisdom we find to overreach ours, and whose intentions we cannot sound: it was Elihu's observation, *With God is terrible majesty: the Almighty, we cannot find him out;—men do therefore fear him.* Job xxxvii. 22, 23, 24.

17. It is also requisite, that God should dispose many occurrences, cross to our vulgar notions, and offensive to our carnal sense, that we may thence be prompted to think of God, driven to seek him, engaged to mark him interposing in our affairs: men from disorderly and surprising accidents preposterously do conceive doubts about Providence, as if it managing things, nothing odd, or amiss, would occur; whereas if no such events did start up, they might be proner to question it, they would at least come to forget or neglect it; for if human transactions passed on as do the motions of nature, in a smooth course, without any rub or disturbance, men commonly would no more think of God than they do when they behold the sun rising, the rivers running, the sea flowing; they would not depend on his protection, or have recourse to him for succour: it is difficulty and distress seizing on them, which compel men to implore God for relief, which dispose them to see his hand reaching it forth

[e] Quod videri communiter, quod comprehendi, quod æstimari potest, minus est oculis quibus occupatur, et manibus quibus contaminatur, et sensibus quibus invenitur. *Tert. Apol.* 17.

[f] Hoc est quod Deum æstimari facit, dum æstimari non capit. *Tert.* 16.

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unto them; according to that in the Psalm; *When he slew them, then they sought him; they returned and inquired early after God; they remembered that God was their rock, and the most high God their redeemer.* Again,

Ps. lxxviii. 34, 35.

18. It is needful that the present course of Providence should not be transparently clear and satisfactory, that we may be well assured concerning a future account, and forced in our thoughts to recur thither for a resolution of all such emergent doubts and difficulties: for if all accounts were apparently stated and discharged here; if now right did ever prevail, and iniquity were suppressed; if virtue were duly crowned, and vice deservedly scourged, who would hope or fear an after-reckoning?

This indeed is the grand cause, why Providence now doth appear so cloudy, that men consider not how our affairs have no complete determination, or final issue here; things now are doing, and not done; in a progress and tendency toward somewhat beyond, not in a state of consistence and perfection; this not being the place of deciding causes or dispensing rewards; but a state of probation, of work, of travail, of combat, of running for the prize, of sowing toward the harvest; a state of liberty to follow our own choice, and to lay the ground of our doom; of falling into sin, and of rising thence by repentance; of God's exercising patience, and exhibiting mercy: wherefore as we cannot well judge of an artificial work by its first draughts, or of a poem by a few scenes, but must stay till all be finished or acted through; so we cannot here clearly discern the entire congruity of providential dispensations to the divine attributes; the catastrophe or utmost resolution of things is the general judgment, wherein the deep wisdom, the exact justice, the perfect goodness of God will be displayed to the full satisfaction or conviction of all men; when God's honour will be thoroughly vindicated, his despised patience and his abused grace will be avenged; every case will be rightly tried, every work will be justly recompensed, all accounts will be set straight; in the mean time divers

Chrys. tom. vii. p. 15.

Rom. ii. 7.

things must occur, unaccountable to us, looking upon things as they now stand absolutely before us, without reference to that day; considering this may induce us to suspend our opinion about such matters, allowing God to go through with his work before we censure it, not being so quick and precipitate as to forestal his judgment: and surely, would we but observe that reasonable advice of St. Paul, *Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come,* our chief doubts would be resolved, our shrewdest exceptions against Providence would be voided. 1 Cor. iv. 5.

These are the chief reasons of the point, which meditation did suggest; upon it (for it is not a point merely speculative, but pregnant with useful consequences) divers practical applications may be grounded, which the time scarcely will allow me to name.

1. It should render us modest and sober in our judgment about providential occurrences, not pretending thoroughly to know the reasons of God's proceedings, or to define the consequences of them; for it is plainly fond arrogance, or profane imposture, to assume perfect skill in that which passeth our capacity to learn. Eccles. iii. 20. Psal. cxxxi. 1.

2. It should make us staunch and cautious of grounding judgment or censure upon present events about any cause, or any person; for it is notorious temerity to pass sentence upon grounds uncapable of evidence. Luke xiii. 1.

3. It should repress wanton curiosity, which may transport us beyond our bounds in speculation of these mysterious intrigues; so that we shall lose our labour and time, shall discompose our minds, shall plunge ourselves into vain errors or anxious doubts. Job xi. 12. Wisd. ix. 13. Job xlii. 3.

4. It should keep us from conceitedness and confidence in our own wisdom; for how can we conceit highly of that, or much confide in it, which we find so unable to penetrate the reason of most common and obvious appearances; so nonplust in its inquiries, so defeated in its expectations, so mistaken in its judgments of things? Job xl. 4. xlii. 2. Psal. lxxiii. 22. xxxix. 9.

5. It should preserve us from infidelity, and from de-

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spair upon account of any cross accidents occurring here; for it is unreasonable to disbelieve a notion, otherwise well grounded, because we cannot assoil scruples or cavils drawn from matters inscrutable to us; it is foolish to despair of a good event upon appearances, whereof we cannot apprehend the full reason, or final result.

2 Kings xx. 9. Matt. xvi. 23.

6. It should prevent our taking offence, or being discontented at any events rising up before us; for to be displeased at that, which a superior wisdom, unsearchable to us, doth order, is to be displeased at we know not what, or why, which is childish weakness; to fret and wail at that, which, for all we can see, proceedeth from good intention, and tendeth to good issue, is pitiful frowardness.

Eccles. viii. 11.

7. It should guard us from security, or from presuming upon impunity for our miscarriages; for seeing God doth not always clearly and fully discover his mind, it is vain from God's reservedness to conclude his unconcernedness; or because he is now patient, that he never will be just in chastising our offences.

Isa. xxvi. 11. v. 12.

8. It should quicken our industry in observing and considering the works of Providence; for since they are not easily discernible, and the discerning them in some measure is sometimes of great use, it is needful that we be very diligent in contemplation of them; the fainter our light is, the more attent we should be in looking; the knottier the subject, the more earnest should be our study on it.

9. It should oblige us to be circumspect and wary in our conversation; for the darker the way is, the more careful should be our walking therein, lest we err, lest we stumble, lest we strike on somewhat hurtful to us.

Jer. x. 23.

10. It should engage us constantly to seek God, and to depend on him, for the protection and conduct of his grace, which is the only clue that can lead us safely through this intricate labyrinth of worldly contingencies.

Psal. xxxvi. 6. xcii. 5.

11. In fine, it should cause us humbly to admire and adore that wisdom, which governeth the world in ways

no less great and wonderful, than just and holy: for, *Great and marvellous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, O thou King of Saints.* SERM. LV. Apoc. xv. 3. xix. 2.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON LVI.

OF OBEDIENCE TO OUR SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND GOVERNORS.

HEB. xiii. 17.

Obey them that have the rule over you.

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OBEDIENCE unto spiritual guides and governors is a duty of great importance; the which to declare and press is very seasonable for these times, wherein so little regard is had thereto: I have therefore pitched on this text, being an apostolical precept, briefly and clearly enjoining that duty; and in it we shall consider and explain these two particulars: 1. The persons to whom obedience is to be paid. 2. What that obedience doth import, or wherein it consisteth: and together with explication of the duty, we shall apply it, and urge its practice.

I. As to the persons, unto whom obedience is to be performed, they are, generally speaking, all spiritual guides, or governors of the Church, (those *who speak to us the word of God, and who watch for our souls*, as they are described in the context,) expressed here by a term very significant and apposite, as implying fully the nature of their charge, the qualification of their persons, their rank and privileges in the Church, together consequently with the grounds of obligation to the correspondent duties toward them. There are in holy Scripture divers names and phrases appropriate to them, each of them denoting some eminent part of their office, or some appertenance thereto;

Heb. xiii. 7, 17.

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but this seemeth of all most comprehensive; so that unto it all the rest are well reducible: the term is ἡγούμενοι, that is, *leaders*, or *guides*, or *captains;* which properly may denote the subsequent particulars in way of duty, or privilege, appertaining to them.

1. It may denote eminence of dignity, or superiority to others: that they are, as it is said of Judas and Silas in the Acts, ἄνδρες ἡγούμενοι ἐν ἀδελφοῖς, *principal men among the brethren:* for to *lead* implieth precedence, which is a note of superiority and pre-eminence. Hence are they styled προεστῶτες, *presidents* or prelates; οἱ πρῶτοι, *the first*, or *prime* men; οἱ μείζους, *the greater*, majors, or grandees among us: *He*, saith our Lord, *that will be the first among you, let him be your servant;* and, *He that is greater among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve;* where ὁ μείζων and ὁ ἡγούμενος (the *greater* and the *leader*) are terms equivalent, or interpretative the one of the other; and our Lord in those places, as he prescribeth humility of mind and demeanour, so he implieth difference of rank among his disciples: whence to render especial respect and honour to them, as to our betters, is a duty often enjoined.

Acts xv. 22. 1 Tim. v. 17. Rom. xii. 8. 1 Thess. v. 12. Matth. xx. 27. Luke xxii. 26. Phil. ii. 29. 1 Thess. v. 13. 1 Tim. v. 17.

2. It doth imply power and authority: their superiority is not barely grounded on personal worth or fortune; it serveth not merely for order and pomp; but it standeth upon the nature of their office, and tendeth to use: they are by God's appointment enabled to exercise acts of power; to command, to judge, to check, control, and chastise in a spiritual way, in order to spiritual ends, (the regulation of God's worship and service, the preservation of order and peace, the promoting of edification in divine knowledge and holiness of life;) so are they ἡγέμενοι, as that word in common use (as the word ἡγεμὼν, of kin to it) doth signify, *captains* and *princes*, importing authority to command and rule; (whence the Hebrew word נשׂא, a *prince*, is usually rendered by it; and ὁ ἡγούμενος, is the title attributed to our Lord, to express his kingly function, being the same with ἀρχηγὸς, the *prince*, or *captain;*) hence are they otherwise styled κυβερνήσεις (*gover-*

Matt. ii. 6. Acts v. 31. 1 Cor. xii. 28.

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nors), ἐπίσκοποι (*overseers*, or *superintendants*, as St. Hierome rendereth it,) *pastors*, (a word often signifying *rule*, and attributed to civil governors,) πρεσβύτεροι (*elders*, or *senators*; the word denoteth not merely age, but office and authority,) οἱ ἐπιμελοῦντες, *such as take care for*, the *curators*, or *supervisors* of *the Church*: hence also they are signally and specially in relation unto God styled δοῦλοι (*the servants*,) διάκονοι (*the ministers*,) ὑπηρέται (*the officers*,) λειτουργοὶ (*the public agents*,) οἰκονόμοι (*the stewards*,) συνεργοὶ (*the coadjutors*, or *assistants*), πρέσβεις (*the legates*,) ἄγγελοι (*the angels*, or *messengers*,) *of God*; which titles imply, that God by them, as his substitutes and instruments, doth administer the affairs of his spiritual kingdom: that as by secular magistrates (his vicegerents and officers) he manageth his universal temporal kingdom, or governeth all men in order to their worldly peace and prosperity; so by these spiritual magistrates he ruleth his Church, towards its spiritual welfare and felicity.

Acts xx. 28. Matt. ii. 6. Ps. lxxviii. 71. 1 Pet. v. 2. 2 Sam. v. 2. vii. 7. 1 Tim. iii. 5. 2 Tim. ii. 24. Rom. xv. 16. 1 Cor. iv. 1. 2. iii. 9. vi. 1. xvi. 16. 2 Cor. vi. 4. Tit. i. 2. Gal. iv. 14, Apoc. i. 29.

3. The word also doth imply direction, or instruction; that is, guidance of people in the way of truth and duty, reclaiming them from error and sin: this, as it is a means hugely conducing to the design of their office, so it is a principal member thereof: whence διδάσκαλοι, *doctors*, or masters in doctrine, is a common name of them; and to be διδακτικοὶ, *able and apt to teach*, (ἱκανοὶ διδάξαι, and πρόθυμοι,) is a chief qualification of their persons; and to *attend on teaching*, to *be instant in preaching*, to *labour in the word and doctrine*, are their most commendable performances: hence also they are called *shepherds*, because they feed the souls of God's people with the food of wholesome instruction; *watchmen*, because they observe men's ways, and warn them when they decline from right, or run into danger; the *messengers* of God, because they declare God's mind and will unto them for the regulation of their practice.

Eph. iv. 11. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Rom. xii. 7. 1 Tim. iii. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 28. ii. 2. 1 Tim. iv. 13, 16. v. 17. 2 Tim. iv. 2. Col. i. 28.

4. The word farther may denote exemplary practice; for to lead implieth so to go before, that he who is conducted may follow; as a captain marcheth before his troop; as a shepherd walketh before his flock, as a guide

goeth before the traveller whom he directeth; hence they are said to be, and enjoined to behave themselves *as patterns of the flock;* and the people are charged to imitate and follow them. 1 Pet. v. 3. 1 Tim. iv. 12.

Such in general doth the word here used imply the persons to be, unto whom obedience is prescribed: but there is farther some distinction to be made among them; there are degrees and subordinations in these guidances; some are in regard to different persons both empowered to guide, and obliged to follow, or obey. Phil. iii. 17. Tit. ii. 7. 2 Thess. iii. 9, 7. Heb. iii. 7 1 Thess. i. 6. 1 Cor. xi. 1. iv. 16.

The Church is *acies ordinata*, a well marshalled army; wherein, under the *Captain-general of our faith and salvation* (*the Head of the body*, the sovereign Prince and Priest, the Arch-pastor, the chief *Apostle of our profession* and *Bishop of our souls*,) there are divers captains serving in fit degrees of subordination; bishops commanding larger regiments, presbyters ordering less numerous companies; all which, by the bands of common faith, of mutual charity, of holy communion and peace, being combined together, do in their respective stations govern and guide, are governed and guided: the bishops, each in his precincts, guiding more immediately the priests subject to them; the priests, each guiding the people committed to his charge: all bishops and priests being guided by synods established, or congregated, upon emergent occasion; many of them ordinarily by those principal bishops, who are regularly settled in a presidency over them; according to the distinctions constituted by God and his apostles, or introduced by human prudence, as the preservation of order and peace (in various times and circumstances of things) hath seemed to require: to which subordination the two great apostles may seem to have regard, when they bid us ὑποτάσσεσθαι ἀλλήλοις, *to be subject to one another*[a]; their injunction at least may, according to their general intent, (which aimeth at the preservation of order and peace,) be well extended so far. 1 Pet. v. 4. Heb. iii. 1. 1 Pet. v. 5. Eph. v. 21. Phil. ii. 3.

[a] Ὑποτασσέσθω ἕκαστος τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ καθὼς ἡ ἐτέθη ἐν τῇ χαρίσματι αὐτοῦ. *Clem. ad Corinth.* p. 49.

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Of this distinction there was never in ancient times made any question, nor did it seem disputable in the Church, except to one malecontent, (Aerius,) who did indeed get a name in story, but never made much noise, or obtained any vogue in the world; very few followers he found in his heterodoxy; no great body even of heretics could find cause to dissent from the Church in this point: but all Arians, Macedonians, Novatians, Donatists, &c. maintained the distinction of ecclesiastical orders among themselves, and acknowledged the duty of the inferior clergy to their bishops: and no wonder, seeing it standeth upon so very firm and clear grounds; upon the reason of the case, upon the testimony of holy Scripture, upon general tradition and unquestionable monuments of antiquity, upon the common judgment and practice of the greatest saints, persons most renowned for wisdom and piety in the Church.

Cyr. Ep. 10, 12.

Ep. 27, 65.

Reason plainly doth require such subordinations; for that without them it is scarce possible to preserve any durable concord or charity in Christian societies, to establish any decent harmony in the worship and service of God, to check odious scandals, to prevent or repress baneful factions, to guard our religion from being overspread with pernicious heresies, to keep the Church from being shattered into numberless sects, and thence from being crumbled into nothing; in fine, for any good time to uphold the profession and practice of Christianity itself: for how, if there be not settled corporations of Christian people, having bulk and strength sufficient by joint endeavour to maintain the truth, honour, and interest of their religion; if the Church should only consist of independent and incoherent particles, (like dust or sand,) easily scattered by any wind of opposition from without, or by any commotion within; if Christendom should be merely a Babel of confused opinions and practices; how, I say, then could Christianity subsist? how could the simple, among so discordant apprehensions, be able to discern the truth of it? how would the wise be tempted to dislike it, being so mangled and disfigured? what an object of contempt and

scorn would it be to the profaner world, in such a case! It needeth therefore considerable societies to uphold it; but no society (especially of any large extent) can abide in order and peace, under the management of equal and co-ordinate powers; without a single undivided authority, enabled to moderate affairs, and reduce them to a point, to arbitrate emergent cases of difference, to put good orders in execution, to curb the adversaries of order and peace: these things cannot be well performed, where there is a parity of many concurrents, apt to dissent, and able to check each other [b]; no democracy can be supported without borrowing somewhat from monarchy; no body can live without a head; an army cannot be without a general, a senate without a president, a corporation without a supreme magistrate [c]: this all experience attesteth; this even the chief impugners of episcopal presidency do by their practice confess; who for prevention of disorder have been fain of their own heads to devise ecclesiastical subordinations of classes, provinces, and nations; and to appoint moderators (or temporary bishops) in their assemblies; so that reason hath forced the dissenters from the Church to imitate it.

If there be not inspectors over the doctrine and manners of the common clergy, there will be many who will say and do any thing; they will in teaching please their own humour, or soothe the people, or serve their own interests; they will indulge themselves in a licentious manner of life; they will clash in their doctrines, and scatter the people, and draw them into factions.

It is also very necessary for preserving the unity and communion of the parts of the Catholic Church; seeing

[b] Ecclesiæ salus in summi sacerdotis dignitate consistit, cui si non exors quædam, et ab omnibus eminens detur potestas tot in ecclesia efficientur schismata, quot sacerdotes. *Hier. in Lucif.*

Nec presbyterorum cœtus rite constitutus dici potest, in quo nullus sit ἡγέμενος. *Bez. de Grad. Min.* cap. 22.

[c] Essentiale fuit, quod ex Dei ordinatione perpetua necesse fuit, est, et erit, ut presbyterio quispiam et loco et dignitate primus actioni gubernandæ præsit cum eo, quod ipsi divinitus attributum est jure. *Bez. de Min. Evang. Grad.* cap. xxiii. p. 153.

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single persons are much fitter to maintain correspondence, than headless bodies.

The very credit of religion doth require, that there should be persons raised above the common level, and endued with eminent authority, to whose care the promoting it should be committed; for such as the persons are, who manage any profession, such will be the respect yielded thereto: if the ministers of religion be men of honour and authority, religion itself will be venerable; if *those* be mean, *that* will become contemptible.

The holy Scripture also doth plainly enough counte-
Apoc. ii. 3, &c. nance this distinction; for therein we have represented one angel presiding over principal churches, which contained several presbyters; therein we find episcopal ordination and
Tit. i. 5. jurisdiction exercised; we have one bishop constituting
1 Tim. v. 1, 17, 19, presbyters in divers cities of his diocese: ordering all things
20, 22, &c. therein concerning ecclesiastical discipline; judging presbyters, rebuking, μετὰ πασῆς ἐπιταγῆς, *with all authority*, (or imperiousness, as it were; Tit. ii. 15.) and reconciling offenders, secluding heretics and scandalous persons.

In the Jewish Church there were an high-priest, chief-priest, a sanhedrim, or senate, or synod.

The government of congregations among God's ancient people (which it is probable was the pattern that the Apostles, no affecters of needless innovation, did follow in establishing ecclesiastical discipline among Christians) doth hereto agree; for in their synagogues, answering to our Christian churches, they had, as their elders and doctors,
ראש הקהל so over them an ἀρχισυνάγωγος, the head of the eldership, and president of the synagogue.

The primitive general use of Christians most effectually doth back the Scripture, and interpret it in favour of this distinction; scarce less than demonstrating it constituted by the Apostles; for how otherwise is it imaginable, that all the churches founded by the Apostles, in several most distant and disjoined places, (at Jerusalem, at Antioch, at Alexandria, at Ephesus, at Corinth, at Rome,) should presently conspire in acknowledgment and use of it? how

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could it without apparent confederacy be formed, how could it creep in without notable clatter, how could it be admitted without considerable opposition, if it were not in the foundation of those churches laid by the Apostles? How is it likely, that in those times of grievous persecution, falling chiefly upon the bishops, (when to be eminent among Christians yielded slender reward, and exposed to extreme hazard; when to seek pre-eminence was in effect to court danger and trouble, torture and ruin,) an ambition of irregularly advancing themselves above their brethren should so generally prevail among the ablest and best Christians? How could those famous martyrs for the Christian truth be some of them so unconscionable as to affect, others so irresolute as to yield to such injurious encroachments? and how could all the holy Fathers (persons of so renowned, so approved wisdom and integrity) be so blind as not to discern such a corruption, or so bad as to abet it? How indeed could all God's Church be so weak as to consent in judgment, so base as to comply in practice with it? In fine, how can we conceive that all the best monuments of antiquity down from the beginning (the acts, the epistles, the histories, the commentaries, the writings of all sorts coming from the blessed martyrs, and most holy confessors of our faith) should conspire to abuse us; the which do speak nothing but bishops; long catalogues and rows of bishops succeeding in this and that city; bishops contesting for the faith against Pagan idolators, and heretical corrupters of Christian doctrine; bishops here teaching and planting our religion by their labours, there suffering and watering it with their blood?

I could not but touch this point; but I cannot insist thereon; the full discussion of it, and vindication of the truth from the cavils advanced against the truth by modern dissenters from the Church, having employed voluminous treatises: I shall only farther add, that if any man be so dully or so affectedly ignorant as not to see the reason of the case, and the dangerous consequences of rejecting this ancient form of discipline; if any be so overweeningly presumptuous, as to question the faith of all

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history, or to disavow those monuments and that tradition, upon the testimony whereof even the truth and certainty of our religion, and all its sacred oracles do rely; if any be so perversely contentious, as to oppose the custom and current practice of the churches through all ages down to the last age; so self-conceitedly arrogant, as to condemn or slight the judgment and practice of all the Fathers, (together also with the opinion of the later most grave divines, who have judged episcopal presidency needful, or expedient, where practicable;) so peevishly refractory as to thwart the settled order of that Church, in which he was baptized, together with the law of the country, in which he was born; upon such a person we may look as one utterly invincible and intractable: so weak a judgment, and so strong a will, who can hope by reason to convert? I shall say no more to that point.

1 Cor. xi. 16.

The ἡγούμενοι then (the guides and governors) in our text are primarily the bishops, as the superior and chief guides, each in his place according to order peaceably established; then secondarily the presbyters, in their station as guides inferior, together with the deacons as their assistants: such the Church always hath had, and such, by God's blessing, our Church now hath, toward whom the duty of obedience is to be performed.

To the consideration of that I should now proceed: but first it seemeth expedient to remove a main obstruction to that performance; which is this: a misprision, or doubt concerning the persons of our guides and governors; for in vain it would be to teach or persuade us to obey them, if we do not know who they are, or will not acknowledge them: for as in religion it is *primus Deorum cultus Deos credere, the first worship of God to believe God*, as Seneca saith; so it is the first part of our obedience to our governors to avow them; it is at least absolutely prerequisite thereto. It was of old a precept of St. Paul to the Thessalonians; *We beseech you, brethren, to know those who labour among you, and preside over you:* and another to the Corinthians; *Submit yourselves*, saith he, *to such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth:* then he

Sen. Ep. 95.

1 Thess. v. 12.

1 Cor. xvi. 16, 18.

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subjoineth, ἐπιγινώσκετε τοὺς τοιούτους, *acknowledge such.* There were, it seemeth, those in the apostolical time, who would not know or acknowledge their guides; there were even those, who would not *admit* the Apostles themselves, as St. John saith of Diotrephes, who *resisted their words*, as St. Paul saith of Alexander, to whom the Apostles were not Apostles, as St. Paul intimateth concerning some, in regard to himself; there were then *pseud-apostles*, who excluded the *true Apostles*, intruding themselves into that high office: no wonder then, it may be, that now, in these dregs of time, there should be many who disavow and desert their true guides, transferring the observance due to them upon bold pretenders; who are not indeed guides, but seducers; not governors, but usurpers, and sacrilegious invaders of this holy office: the duty we speak of cannot be secured without preventing or correcting this grand mistake; and this we hope to compass by representing a double character, or description, one of the *true guides*, another of the *counterfeits*; by comparing which we may easily distinguish them, and consequently be induced dutifully to avow and follow the one sort, wisely to disclaim and decline the other.

3 John 10.

2 Tim. iv. 15.

2 Cor. ix. 2.

2 Cor. xi. 13.

Phil. iii. 2.

Those, I say, then, who constantly do profess and teach that sound and wholesome doctrine, which was delivered by our Lord and his Apostles in word and writing, was received by their disciples in the primitive churches, was transmitted and confirmed by general tradition, was sealed by the blood of the blessed martyrs, and propagated by the labours of the holy Fathers; the which also manifestly recommendeth and promoteth true reverence and piety toward God, justice and charity toward men, order and quiet in human societies, purity and sobriety in each man's private conversation.

Those who celebrate the true worship of God, and administer the holy mysteries of our religion in a serious, grave, decent manner, purely and without any notorious corruption, either by hurtful error, or superstitious foppery, or irreverent rudeness, to the advancement of God's

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honour, and edification of the participants in virtue and piety.

Those who derive their authority by a continued succession from the Apostles; who are called unto, and constituted in their office in a regular and peaceable way, agreeable to the institution of God, and the constant practice of his Church; according to rules approved in the best and purest ages: who are prepared to the exercise of their function by the best education that ordinarily can be provided, under sober discipline, in the schools of the prophets, who thence by competent endowments of mind, and useful furniture of good learning, acquired by painful study, become qualified to guide and instruct the people: who, after previous examination of their abilities, and probable testimonies concerning their manners, (with regard to the qualifications of incorrupt doctrine, and sober conversation prescribed by the Apostles,) are adjudged fit for the office; who also in a pious, grave, solemn manner, with invocation of God's blessing, by *laying on the hands of the presbytery*, are admitted thereunto.

1 Tim. iii. 7, 10.

Those whose practice in guiding and governing the people of God is not managed by arbitrary, uncertain, fickle, private fancies or humours, but regulated by standing laws; framed (according to general directions extant in holy Scripture) by pious and wise persons, with mature advice, in accommodation to the seasons and circumstances of things for common edification, order, and peace.

Those who, by virtue of their good principles, in their disposition and demeanour appear sober, orderly, peaceable, yielding meek submission to government, tendering the Church's peace, upholding the communion of the saints, abstaining from all schismatical, turbulent, and factious practices.

Those also, who are acknowledged by the laws of our country, an obligation to obey whom is part of that *human constitution*, unto which we are in all things (not evidently repugnant to God's law) indispensably bound to submit; whom our sovereign, God's vicegerent and

1 Pet. iii. 13.

the nursing father of his Church among us, (unto whom in all things high respect, in all lawful things entire obedience is due,) doth command and encourage us to obey. SERM. LVI.

Those, I say, to whom this character plainly doth agree, we may reasonably be assured, that they are our true guides and governors, whom we are obliged to follow and obey: for what better assurance can we in reason desire? what more proper marks can be assigned to discern them by? what methods of constituting such needful officers can be settled more answerable to their design and use? how can it be evil or unsafe to follow guides authorised by such warrants, conformed to such patterns, endowed with such dispositions, acting by such principles and rules, can we mistake or miscarry by complying with the great body of God's church through all ages, and particularly with those great lights of the primitive Church, who by the excellency of their knowledge, and the integrity of their virtue, have so illustrated our holy religion?

There are, on the other hand, sufficiently plain characters, by which we may descry seducers, and false pretenders to guide us.

Those who do ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν, *teach otherwise*, or discost from the good ancient wholesome doctrine, revealed in the holy Scripture, attested by universal tradition, professed, taught, maintained to death by the primitive saints and martyrs; who affect novelties, uncouth notions, big words, and dark phrases; who dote on curious empty speculations, and idle questions, which engender strife, and yield no good fruit. 1 Tim. vi. 3. i. 3, 4. Gal. i. 9. 1 Tim. i. 4. vi. 4, 20. 2 Tim. ii. 14, 16, 23. Tit. iii. 9. 2 Pet. ii. 18.

Those who ground their opinions and warrant their proceedings not by clear testimonies of divine revelation, by the dictates of sound reason, by the current authority of wise and good men, but by the suggestions of their own fancy, by the impulses of their passion and zeal, by pretences to special inspiration, by imaginary necessities, and such like fallacious rules. Ipsorum ordinationes temerariæ, inconstantes, leves. *Tertull.*

Those who, by counterfeit shews of mighty zeal and

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extraordinary affection, by affected forms of speech, by pleasing notions, by prophesying *smooth things*, daubing and glozing, by various artifices of flattery and fraud, attract and abuse weak and heedless people.

Those who, without any apparent commission from God, or allowable call from men, or extraordinary necessity of the case, in no legal or regular way, according to no custom received in God's Church, do intrude themselves into the office, or are only assumed thereto by ignorant, unstable, giddy, factious people [d], such as those of whom St. Paul saith, that *according to their own lusts they heap up teachers to themselves, having itching ears.*

2 Tim. iv. 3.

Those who are not in reasonable ways fitly prepared, not duly approved, not competently authorised, not orderly admitted to the office, according to the prescriptions of God's word, and the practice of his Church; not entering into the fold by the door, but breaking through, or clambering over the fences of sober discipline.

Those who in their mind, their principles, their designs, and all their practice, appear void of that charity, that meekness, that calmness, that gravity, that sincerity, that stability which qualify worthy and true guides: who in the disposition of their mind are froward, fierce, and stubborn; in their principles loose and slippery; in their designs and behaviour turbulent, disorderly, violent, deceitful: who regard not order or peace, but wantonly raise scandals, create dissensions, abet and foment disturbances in the Church; who under religious appearances indulge their passions, and serve their interests, using a guise of devotion, and talk about holy things as instruments to vent wrath, envy and spleen; to drive forward designs of ambition and avarice: who will not submit to any certain

[d] Hi sunt qui se ultro apud temerarios convenas sine Divina dispositione præficiunt, qui se præpositos sine ulla ordinationis lege constituunt, qui nemine episcopatum dante episcopi sibi nomen assumunt. *Cypr. de Un. Eccl.* p. 256.

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judgment or rule, will like nothing but what their fancy suggests, will acknowledge no law but their own will; who for no just cause, and upon any slender pretence, withdraw themselves, and seduce others from the Church, in which they were brought up, deserting its communion, impugning its laws, defaming its governors, endeavouring to subvert its establishment: who manage their discipline (such as it is of their own framing) unadvisedly and unsteadily, in no stable method, according to no settled rule, but as present conceit, or humour, or advantage prompteth; so that not being fixed in any certain judgment or practice, they soon clash with themselves, and divide from one another, incessantly roving from one sect to another; *being carried about with divers and strange doctrines; like children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine.* Heb. xiii. 9. Eph. iv. 14.

Those, the fruits of whose doctrine and managery amount at best only to empty *form of godliness, void of real virtue;* while in truth they fill the minds of men with ill passions, ill surmises, ill will; they produce impious, unjust, and uncharitable dealing of all kinds, particularly discontentful murmurings, disobedience to magistrates, schisms and factions in the Church, combustions and seditions in the State.

In fine, those who in their temper and their deportment resemble those ancient seducers, branded in the Scripture, those *evil men, who did seduce, and were seduced:* 2 Tim. iii. 13.

Whose dispositions are represented in these epithets: they were ἀνυπότακτοι, *unruly*, or persons indisposed and unwilling to submit to government; τολμηταὶ, αὐθάδεις, *presumptuous, and self-willed*, or self-pleasing darers; γογγυσαὶ, μεμψίμοιροι, *murmurers, complainers*, or conjunctly discontented mutiners; αὐτοκατάκριτοι, *self-condemned*, namely, by contradictious shuffling and shifting, or by excommunicating themselves from the Church; γόητες, *bewitchers*, inveigling and deluding credulous people by dissimulation and specious appearances; *having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; being wolves in sheep's clothing, grievous wolves, not sparing the flock;* Tit. i. 10. 2 Pet. ii. 10. Tit. iii. 10, 11. 2 Tim. iii. 13, 4. Matt. vii. 15. Acts xx. 29.

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deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the servants of Christ, and ministers of righteousness; lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, proud, revilers, truce-breakers, false accusers, traitors, heady, high minded, vain talkers, deceivers, ignorant, unlearned, unstable:

2 Cor. xi. 13, 15. 1 Tim. vi. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 16.

Whose practices were; *to cause divisions and offences contrary to received doctrine; by good words and fair speeches to deceive the hearts of the simple;—to swerve from charity —having turned aside to vain jangling, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm: to beguile unstable souls; to lie in wait to deceive; to speak perverse things that they may draw disciples after them; to creep into houses, captivating silly women; to dote about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings; to speak swelling words of vanity; to admire persons because of advantage,* (or out of private design, for self-interest;) *to subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake; to speak lies in hypocrisy; to preach Christ out of envy and strife, not out of good-will, or pure intention,* (οὐχ ἁγνῶς,) *not purely; to promise liberty* to their followers; *to walk disorderly;* (that is, in repugnance to order settled in the Church) *to despise dominion, and without fear to reproach dignities; to speak evil* (rashly) *of those things which they know not,* (which are beside their skill and cognizance;) *to separate themselves* from the Church.

Rom. xvi. 17, 18. (1 Tim. i. 6, 7.) Eph. iv. 14. Acts xx. 19. 2 Tim. iii. 5. 1 Tim. vi. 4. 2 Pet. ii. 18. Jude 16. Tit. i. 11. 1 Tim. iv. 2. Phil. i. 15, 16. 2 Pet. ii. 19. 2 Thess. iii. 6, 11. 2 Pet. ii. 10. Jude 8. Jude 10. Jude 9. 2 John 9.

Such persons as these, arrogating to themselves the office of guides, and pretending to lead us, we must not follow or regard; but are in reason and conscience obliged to reject and shun them, as the ministers of Satan, the pests of Christendom, the enemies and murderers of souls.

Tit. iii. 10. 2 Thess. iii. 6. Rom. xvi. 17. 1 Tim. vi. 5.

It can indeed nowise be safe to follow any such leaders, (whatever pretences to special illumination they hold forth, whatever specious guises of sanctity they bear,) who in their doctrine or practice deflect from the great beaten roads of holy Scripture, primitive tradition, and catholic practice, roving in by-paths suggested to them by their private fancies and humours, their passions and

lusts, their interests and advantages: there have in all ages such counterfeit guides started up, having debauched some few heedless persons, having erected some παρασυναγωγὰς, or petty combinations against the regularly settled corporations; but never with any durable success or countenance of divine Providence; but like prodigious meteors, having caused a little gazing, and some disturbance, their sects have soon been dissipated, and have quite vanished away; the authors and abetters of them being either buried in oblivion, or recorded with ignominy: like that Theudas in the speech of Gamaliel, who *rose up, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves; who was slain, and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.*

Jude 13.

Acts v. 36.

But let thus much suffice to have been spoken concerning the persons to whom obedience must be performed.

SERMON LVII.

OF OBEDIENCE TO OUR SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND GOVERNORS.

HEB. xiii. 17.

Obey them that have the rule over you.

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I PROCEED to the duty itself, the obedience prescribed, which may (according to the extent in signification of the word πείθεσθαι) be conceived to relate either to the government, or to the doctrine, or to the conversation of the persons specified; implying, that we should obey their laws, that we should embrace their doctrine, that we should conform to their practice, according to proper limitations of such performance, respectively.

We begin with the first, as seeming chiefly intended by the words:

Obedience to ecclesiastical government: what this doth import we may understand by considering the terms whereby it is expressed, and those whereby its correlate (spiritual government) is signified; by examples and practice relating to it, by the nature and reason of the matter itself.

Beside the word πείθεσθαι, (which is commonly used to signify all sorts of obedience, chiefly that which is due to governors,) here is added a word serving to explain that, the word ὑπείκειν, which signifieth to yield, give way, or comply; relating (as it seemeth by its being put indefinitely) to all their proceedings in matters concerning their charge. In other places, parallel to our text, it is ex-

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pressed by ὑποτάσσεσθαι, the same term by which constantly the subjection due to secular powers, in all the precepts enjoining it, is expressed: Ὁμοίως νεώτεροι ὑποτάγητε πρεσβυτέροις, (Tit. iii. 1. Rom. xiii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 13.) *In like manner*, (or correspondently,) saith St. Peter, *ye younger submit yourselves to the elder;* (that is, as the context shews, ye inferiors in the Church obey your superiors; 1 Pet. v. 5. Luke xxii. 26. ὁ νεώτερος both there and otherwhere doth signify the state of inferiority, as ὁ πρεσβύτερος importeth dignity and authority.) And, ὑποτάσσεσθε τοῖς τοιούτοις, *submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth,* saith St. Paul; and, ἀλλήλοις ὑποτασσόμενοι, *submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God,* that is, yielding conscientiously that submission, which established order requireth from one to another: whence we may collect, that the duty consisteth in yielding submission and compliance to all laws, rules, and orders enacted by spiritual governors for the due celebratiou of God's worship, the promoting edification, the conserving decency, the maintenance of peace; as also to the judgments and censures in order to the same purposes administered by them. 1 Cor. xvi. 16. Eph. v. 21. 1 Pet. v. 5.

This obedience to be due to them may likewise be inferred from the various names and titles attributed to them; such as those of Prelates, Superintendents, Pastors, Supervisors, Governors, and Leaders; which terms (more largely touched before) do imply command and authority of all sorts, legislative, judicial, and executive.

Such obedience also primitive practice doth assert to them: for what authority the holy Apostles did assume and exercise, the same we may reasonably suppose derived to them; the same in kind, although not in peculiarity of manner, (by immediate commission from Christ, with supply of extraordinary gifts and graces,) and in unlimitedness of extent: for they do succeed to the Apostles in charge and care over the Church, each in his precinct, the apostolical office being distributed among them all. The same titles which the Apostles assumed to themselves they ascribe to their Sympresbyters, requiring the same duties from them, and prescribing obedience to them

Cujus in solidum singuli participes sumus. *Vid. Cypr. de Unit. Eccl.*

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in the same terms; they claimed no more power than was needful to further edification, and this is requisite that present governors also should have; their practice in government may also well be presumed exemplary to all future governors. As then we see them διατάσσειν, *to order* things, and frame ecclesiastical constitutions; διορθοῦν, *to rectify* things, or reform *defects*, to *impose* observances *necessary*, or expedient to the time; to judge causes and persons, *being ready to avenge*, or punish, *every disobedience;* to *use severity* upon occasions; with the spiritual *rod* to chastise scandalous offenders, *disorderly walkers*, persons contumacious and unconformable to their injunctions; to reject heretics, and banish notorious sinners from communion, warning the faithful to forbear conversation with them: as they did challenge to themselves *an authority from Christ* to exercise these and the like acts of spiritual dominion and jurisdiction, exacting punctual obedience to them; as we also see the like acts exercised by bishops, whom they did constitute to feed and rule the Church; so we may reasonably conceive all governors of the Church (the heirs of their office) invested with like authority in order to the same purposes, and that correspondent obedience is due to them; so that what blame, what punishment was due to those, who disobeyed the Apostles, doth in proportion belong to the transgressors of their duty toward the present governors of the Church; especially considering that our Lord promised his perpetual presence and assistance to the Apostles.

2 Cor. x. 8. xiii. 10. To ordain elders. To confirm proselytes. To exercise jurisdiction. 1 Cor. xi. 34. Tit. i. 5. Acts xv. 28. 1 Cor. v. 12. 2 Cor. x. 6. xiii. 10. 1 Cor. iv. 21. xii. 21. xiii. 2. 2 Thess. iii. 6, 14. Tit. iii. 10. 1 Tim. vi. 5. Rom. xvi. 17. 2 Cor. x. 8. xiii. 10. Episcopi successores Apostolorum. *Cypr. Ep.* 27. 69. &c. *Ep.* 41. 75. (Firmil.)

Matt. xxviii. 20.

We may farther observe, that accordingly, in continual succession from the first ages, the good primitive bishops (the great patrons and propagators of our religion) did generally assume such power, and the people readily did yield obedience; wherein that one did wrongfully usurp, the other did weakly comply, were neither probable nor just to suppose: whence general tradition doth also confirm our obligation to this duty.

That this kind of obedience is required doth also farther appear from considering the reason of things, the condition of the Church, the design of Christian religion.

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1. Every Christian church is a society; no society can abide in any comely order, any steady quiet, any desirable prosperity, without government; no government can stand without correspondent obligation to submit thereto.

2. Again; The state of religion under the Gospel is the kingdom of heaven; Christ our Lord is king of the Church; it he visibly governeth and ordereth by the spiritual governors, as his substitutes and lieutenants; (whence they peculiarly are styled his ministers, his officers, his stewards, his legates, his co-workers.) When he ascending up to God's right hand was invested with entire possession of that royal state, he settled them to administer affairs concerning that government in his place and name: *Ascending up on high he gave gifts unto men.—He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers:* Eph. iv. 8, 11, 12. he gave them, that is, he appointed them in their office, subordinate to himself, *for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* As to him, therefore, ruling by them, by them enacting laws, dispensing justice, maintaining order and peace, obedience is due.

3. Again; For the honour of God, the commendation of religion, and benefit of the people, it is needful, that in all religious performances things should, according to St. Paul's rule, be performed *decently, and according to order,* without unhandsome confusion, and troublesome distraction: this cannot be accomplished without a determination of persons, of modes, of circumstances appertaining to those performances; (for how can any thing be performed decently, if every person hath not his rank and station, his office and work allotted to him; if to every thing to be done, its time, its place, its manner of performance be not assigned, so that each one may know what, when, where, and how he must do?) Such determination must be committed to the discretion and care of some persons, empowered to frame standing laws or rules concerning it, and to see them duly executed; (for all persons without delay, strife, confusion, and disturbance, cannot meddle in it:) with these (1 Cor. xiv. 23. Tit. ii. 10.) 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

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persons all the rest of the body must be obliged to comply; otherwise all such determinations will be vain and ineffectual. Such order reason doth recommend in every proceeding; such order especially becometh the grandeur and importance of sacred things; such order God hath declared himself to approve, and love, especially in his own house, among his people, in matters relating to his service; for, *He is not*, as St. Paul saith, arguing to this purpose, *the God of confusion, but of peace, in all churches of the saints.*

1 Cor. xiv. 33.

4. Again; It is requisite that all Christian brethren should conspire in serving God with mutual charity, hearty concord, harmonious consent; that, as the Apostles so often prescribed, they *should endeavour to keep unity of spirit in the bond of peace;* that they should *be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind, standing fast in one spirit, with one mind; that they should walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing; that with one mind and one mouth they should glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; that they should all speak the same thing; and that there be no divisions among them, but that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment;* (like those in the Acts, of whom it is said, *The multitude of believers had one heart and one soul;*) *that there should be no schisms* (divisions, or factions) *in the body;* that all dissensions, all *murmurings*, all emulations should be discarded from the Church: the which precepts, secluding an obligation to obedience, would be impossible, and vain; for (without continual miracle, and transforming human nature, things not to be expected from God, who apparently designeth to manage religion by ordinary ways of human prudence, his gracious assistance concurring) no durable concord in any society can ever effectually be maintained otherwise than by one public reason, will, and sentence, which may represent, connect, and comprise all; in defect of that every one will be of a several opinion about what is best, each will be earnest for the prevalence of his mode and way; there will be so many lawgivers as persons, so many differences as matters incident; nothing will pass

Σύμψυχοι. Phil. ii. 2.
Ὁμόφρονες. 1 Pet. iii. 8. Eph. iv. 3. Phil. ii. 2. i. 27. iii. 16. Rom. xv. 5, 6. xii. 16. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. 1 Cor. i. 10.
Acts iv. 32. 1 Cor. xii. 25. xi. 18. i. 11. iii. 3. 2 Cor. xii. 20. Phil. ii. 14.

smoothly and quietly, without bickering and jangling, and consequently without animosities and feuds: whence no unanimity, no concord, scarce any charity or good-will can subsist.

5. Farther; in consequence of these things, common edification requireth such obedience; it is the duty of governors to order all things to this end, that is, to the maintenance, encouragement, and improvement of piety; for this purpose their authority was given them, as St. Paul saith, and therefore it must be deemed thereto conducible; it is indeed very necessary to edification, which, without discipline guiding the simple and ignorant, reclaiming the erroneous and presumptuous, cherishing the regular, and correcting the refractory, can nowise be promoted.

2 Cor. xiii. 10. x. 8.

Excluding it, there can be no means of checking or redressing scandals, which to the reproach of religion, to the disgrace of the Church, to the corrupting the minds, and infecting the manners of men, will spring up, and spread. Neither can there be any way to prevent the rise and growth of pernicious errors, or heresies; the which assuredly in a state of unrestrained liberty the wanton and wicked minds of men will breed, their licentious practice will foster and propagate, to *the increase of all impiety: their mouths must be stopped*, otherwise *they will subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not for filthy lucre's sake; the word* of naughty seducers *will spread like a gangrene*, if there be no corrosive or corrective remedy to stay its progress.

1 Tim. i. 19. vi. 5. 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17, 18. 2 Tim. ii. 16. Tit. i. 11. 2 Tim. ii. 17.

Where things are not managed in a stable, quiet, orderly way, no good practice can flourish, or thrive; dissension will choke all good affections, confusion will obstruct all good proceedings; from anarchy, emulation and strife will certainly grow, and from them all sorts of wickedness; for *where*, saith St. James, there is *emulation and strife, there is confusion and every evil thing*.

Jam. iii. 17.

All those benefits, which arise from holy communion in offices of piety and charity, (from common prayers and praises to God, from participation in all sacred ordinances,

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from mutual advice, admonition, encouragement, consolation, good example,) will together vanish with discipline; these depend upon the friendly union and correspondence of the members; and no such union can abide without the ligament of discipline, no such correspondence can be upheld without unanimous compliance to public order. The cement of discipline wanting, the Church will not be like a

1 Pet. ii. 5. *spiritual house*, compacted of *lively stones* into one goodly pile; but like a company of scattered pebbles, or a heap of rubbish.

So considering the reason of things, this obedience will appear needful: to enforce the practice thereof, we may adjoin several weighty considerations.

Consider obedience, what it is, whence it springs, what it produceth; each of those respects will engage us to it.

It is in itself a thing very good and acceptable to God, very just and equal, very wise, very comely and pleasant.

It cannot but be grateful unto God, who is the God of love, of order, of peace, and therefore cannot but like the means furthering them; he cannot but be pleased to see men do their duty, especially that which regardeth his own ministers; in the respect performed to whom he is himself indeed avowed, and honoured, and obeyed [a].

It is a just and equal thing, that every member of society should submit to the laws and orders of it; for every man is supposed upon those terms to enter into, and to abide in it; every man is deemed to owe such obedience, in answer to his enjoyment of privileges and partaking of advantages thereby; so therefore whoever pretendeth a title to those excellent immunities, benefits, and comforts, which communion with the Church affordeth, it is most equal, that he should contribute to its support and welfare, its honour, its peace; that consequently

[a] Tempus est,—ut de submissione provocent in se Dei clementiam, et de honore debito in Dei sacerdotem eliciant in se divinam misericordiam. *Cypr. Ep.* 30.

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he should yield obedience to the orders appointed for those ends. Peculiarly equal it is in regard to our spiritual governors, who are obliged to be very solicitous and laborious in furthering our best good; who stand deeply engaged, and are responsible for the welfare of our souls: they must be contented to *spend, and be spent;* to undergo any pains, any hardships, any dangers and crosses occurring in pursuance of those designs: and is it not then plainly equal (is it not indeed more than equal, doth not all ingenuity and gratitude require?) that we should encourage and comfort them in bearing those burdens, and in discharging those incumbencies, by a fair and cheerful compliance? it is the Apostle's enforcement of the duty in our text: *Obey them*, saith he, *and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as those who are to render an account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief*, (or groaning.)

Is it not indeed extreme iniquity and ingratitude, when they with anxious care and earnest toil are endeavouring our happiness, that we should vex and trouble them by our perverse and cross behaviour?

Nay, is it not palpable folly to do thus, seeing thereby we do indispose and hinder them from effectually discharging their duty to our advantage? ἀλυσιτελὲς γὰρ ὑμῖν τοῦτο, *for this*, addeth the Apostle, farther pressing the duty, *is unprofitable to you*, or it tendeth to your disadvantage and damage; not only as involving guilt, but as inferring loss; the loss of all those spiritual benefits, which ministers being encouraged, and thence performing their office with alacrity and sprightful diligence, would procure to you: it is, therefore, our wisdom to be obedient, because obedience is so advantageous and profitable to us.

The same is also a comely and amiable thing, yielding much grace, procuring great honour to the Church, highly adorning and crediting religion: it is a goodly sight to behold things proceeding orderly; to see every person quietly resting in his post, or moving evenly in his rank; to observe superiors calmly leading, inferiors gladly

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following, and equals lovingly accompanying each other: this is the Psalmist's, *Ecce quam bonum! Behold, how* (admirably) *good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!* such a state of things argueth the good temper and wisdom of persons so demeaning themselves, the excellency of the principles which do guide and act them, the goodness of the constitution which they observe; so it crediteth the Church, and graceth religion; a thing which, as St. Paul teacheth, *in all things* we should endeavour.

Ps. cxxxix. 1.

Tit. ii. 10.

It is also a very pleasant and comfortable thing to live in obedience; by it we enjoy tranquillity of mind and satisfaction of conscience, we taste all the sweets of amity and peace, we are freed from the stings of inward remorse, we escape the grievances of discord and strife.

The causes also and principles from which obedience springeth do much commend it: it ariseth from the dispositions of soul which are most Christian and most humane; from charity, humility, meekness, sobriety of mind, and calmness of passion; the which always dispose men to submiss, complaisant, peaceable demeanour toward all men, especially toward those whose relation to them claimeth such demeanour: these a genuine, free, cordial, and constant obedience do signify to live in the soul; together with a general honesty of intention, and exemption from base designs.

In fine, innumerable and inestimable are the benefits and good fruits accruing from this practice; beside the support it manifestly yieldeth to the Church the gracefulness of order, the conveniencies and pleasures of peace, it hath also a notable influence upon the common manners of men, which hardly can ever prove very bad, where the governors of the Church do retain their due respect and authority; nothing more powerfully doth instigate to virtue, than the countenance of authority; nothing more effectually can restrain from exorbitancy of vice, than the bridle of discipline: this obvious experience demonstrateth, and we shall plainly see, if we reflect upon those times when piety and virtue have most flou-

rished: Whence was it, that in those good old times Christians did so abound in good works, that they burned with holy zeal, that they gladly would do, would suffer any thing for their religion? whence but from a mighty respect to their superiors, from a strict regard to their direction and discipline? Did the bishops then prescribe long fasts, or impose rigid penances? willingly did the people undergo them: Did the pastor conduct into danger, did he lead them into the very jaws of death and martyrdom? the flock with a resolute alacrity did follow: Did a prelate interdict any practice scandalous or prejudicial to the Church, under pain of incurring censure? every man trembled at the consequences of transgressing[b]: no terror of worldly power, no severity of justice, no dread of corporal punishment had such efficacy to deter men from ill-doing, as the reproof and censure of a bishop; his frown could avail more than the menaces of an emperor, than the rage of a persecutor, than the rods and axes of an executioner: no rod indeed did smart like the spiritual rod, no sword did cut so deep as that of the Spirit; no loss was then so valuable as being deprived of spiritual advantages; no banishment was so grievous as being separated from holy communion; no sentence of death was so terrible as that which cut men off from the Church; no thunder could astonish or affright men like the crack of a spiritual anathema: this was that which kept virtue in request, and vice in detestation; hence it was that men were so good, that religion did so thrive, that so frequent and so illustrious examples of piety did appear, hence indeed we may well reckon that Christianity did (under so many disadvantages and oppositions) subsist, and grow up; obedience to governors was its guard; that kept the Church firmly united in a body sufficiently strong to maintain itself against all assaults of faction within, of opposition from abroad; that preserved that concord, which disposed and

[b] Neque hoc ita dixerim, ut negligatur ecclesiastica disciplina, et permittatur quisquam facere quod velit sine ulla correptione, et quadam medicinali vindicta, et terribili lenitate, et charitatis severitate. *Aug. adv. Petil.* iii. 4.

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enabled Christians to defend their religion against all fraud and violence; that cherished the true virtue, and the beautiful order, which begot veneration to religion: to it therefore we owe the life and growth of Christianity; so that through many sharp persecutions it hath held up its head, through so many perilous diseases it hath kept its life until this day. There were not then of old any such cavils and clamours against every thing prescribed by governors; there were no such unconscionable scruples, no such hardhearted pretences to tender conscience devised to baffle the authority of superiors: had there been such, had men then commonly been so froward and factious as now, the Church had been soon shivered into pieces, our religion had been swallowed up in confusion and licentiousness.

If again we on the other hand fix our consideration upon disobedience, (the nature, the sources, the consequences thereof,) it will, I suppose, much conduce to the same effect, of persuading us to the practice of this duty.

It is in itself a heinous sin, being the transgression of a command, in nature and consequence very important, upon which God layeth great stress, which is frequently inculcated in Scripture, which is fenced by divers other precepts, which is pressed by strong arguments, and backed by severe threatenings of punishment upon the transgressors.

It is in its nature a kind of apostacy from Christianity, and rebellion against our Lord; for as he that refuseth to obey the king's magistrates in administration of their office is interpreted to disclaim his authority, and to design rebellion against him; so they who obstinately disobey the ministers of our Lord's spiritual kingdom do thereby appear to disavow him, to shake off his yoke, to impeach his reign over them; so doth he himself interpret and take it:

Luke x. 16. Matt. x. 40. Matt. xii. 17.

He, saith our Lord, *that heareth you, heareth me, and he that* (ὁ ἀθετῶν, *that baffleth*) *despiseth you despiseth me;* and, *If any man neglect to hear the Church*, (or shall disobey it, ἐὰν παρακούσῃ,) *let him be to thee as a heathen and a publican;* that is, such a refractory person doth by his contumacy put himself into the state of one removed from *the common-*

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wealth of Israel, he forfeiteth the special protection of God, he becometh as an alien or an outlaw from the kingdom of our Lord [d].

Under the Mosaical dispensation those *who would do presumptuously, and would not hearken unto the priest, that stood to minister before the Lord*, did incur capital punishment; those who factiously murmured against Aaron are said to make an insurrection against God, and answerably were punished in a miraculous way, (*the Lord made a new thing, the earth opened, and swallowed them up; they went down alive into the pit.*) It was in the prophetical times an expression signifying height of impiety, *My people is as those who strive with the priest.* Seeing then God hath no less regard to his peculiar servants now than he had then; seeing they no less represent him, and act by his authority now, than any did then; seeing their service is as precious to him, and as much tendeth to his honour now, as the Levitical service then did; seeing he no less loveth order and peace in the Church, than he did in the Synagogue; we may well suppose it a no less heinous sin, and odious to God, to despise the ministers of Christ's Gospel, than it was before to despise the ministers of Moses's Law [e].

Deut. xvii. 12.

Num. xvii. 11, 30.

Hos. iv. 4.

It is a sin indeed pregnant with divers sins, and involving the breach of many great commands, which are frequently proposed and pressed in the New Testament, with design in great part to guard and secure it: that of *doing all things in charity*; of *doing all things without murmurings and dissensions*; of *pursuing peace so far as lieth in us*; of maintaining unity, concord, unanimity in devotion; of avoiding schisms, and dissensions, and the like: which are all notoriously violated by this disobedience; it includeth the most high breach of charity, the most formal infring-

1 Cor. xvi. 14. Phil. ii. 14. Rom. xii. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 22. Heb. xii. 14. Mark ix. 10.

[d] Nec putent sibi vitæ aut salutis constare rationem, si episcopis et sacerdotibus obtemperare noluerint; cum in Deutron. Deus dicat, &c. *Cypr. Ep.* 61.

[e] Quo exemplo ostenditur, et probatur obnoxios omnes et culpæ et pœnæ futuros, qui se schismaticis contra præpositos et sacerdotes irreligiosa temeritate miscuerint. *Cypr. Ep.* 76.

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ing peace, the most scandalous kind of discord that can be, to cross our superiors [f].

It is also a practice issuing from the worst dispositions of soul, such as are most opposite to the spirit of our religion, and indeed very repugnant to common reason and humanity; from a proud haughtiness or vain wantonness of mind; from the irregularity of unmortified and unbridled passion; from exorbitant selfishness, (selfishness of every bad kind, self-conceit, self-will, self-interest;) from turbulent animosity, froward crossness of humour, rancorous spite, perverse obstinacy; from envy, ambition, avarice, and the like ill sources, the worst fruits of the flesh and corrupt nature: to such dispositions the rejecting God's prophets of old, and the non-compliance with the Apostles are ascribed in Scripture; and from the same the like neglect of God's messengers now do proceed; as whoever will observe, may easily discern; do but mind the discourses of factious people, you shall perceive them all to breathe generally nothing but ill-nature.

The fruits also which it produceth are extremely bad; manifold great inconveniencies and mischiefs, hugely prejudicing the interest of religion and the welfare of the Church.

Vid. Cypr. Ep. 55. Neque enim aliunde, &c.

It is immediately and formally a violation of order and peace; whence all the woful consequences of disorder and faction do adhere thereto.

It breedeth great disgrace to the Church and scandal to religion; for what can appear more ugly than to see among the professors of religion children opposing their fathers, scholars contesting with their masters, inferiors slighting and crossing their superiors? what can more expose the Church and religion to the contempt, to the derision of atheists and infidels, of profane and lewd persons, of wild heretics and schismatics, of all enemies unto truth and piety, than such foul irregularity [g]?

[f] An esse sibi cum Christo videtur, qui adversus sacerdotes Christi facit? &c. *Cypr. de Unit. Eccl.* p. 258.

[g] Inde schismata, et hæreses obortæ sunt, et oriuntur, dum episcopus, qui

It corrupteth the minds and manners of men: for when that discipline is relaxed which was ordained to guard truth and promote holiness; when men are grown so licentious and stubborn as to contemn their superiors, to disregard their wholesome laws and sober advice, there can be no curb to restrain them, but down precipitantly they run into all kind of vicious irregularities and excesses; when those mounds are taken away, whither will men ramble? when those banks are broken down, what can we expect but deluges of impious doctrine and wicked practice, to overflow the ignorant and inconsiderate people?

Ecclesiæ gloria præpositi gloria est. *Cypr. Ep.* 7. 55.

Doth not indeed this practice evidently tend to the dissolution of the Church and destruction of Christianity? for when the *shepherds* are (as to conduct and efficacy) *taken away*, will *not the sheep be scattered*, or *wander astray*, *like sheep without a shepherd*, being bewildered in various errors, and exposed as a prey to any wild beasts; to *the grievous wolves*, to *the ravenous lions*, to the wily foxes? here a fanatical enthusiast will snap them, there a profane libertine will worry them, there again a desperate atheist will tear and devour them [h].

Matt. xxvi. 31.

Consult we but obvious experience, and we shall see what spoils and mines of faith, of good conscience, of common honesty and sobriety, this practice hath in a few years caused; how have atheism and infidelity, how have profaneness and dissoluteness of manners, how have all kinds of dishonesty and baseness grown up since men began to disregard the authority of their spiritual guides! what dismal tragedies have we in our age beheld acted upon this stage of our own country! what bloody wars and murders, (murders

unus est, et ecclesiæ præest superba quorundam præsumptione contemnitur. *Cypr. Ep.* 69.

Hæc sunt initia hæreticorum, et ortus atque conatus schismaticorum male cogitantium ut sibi placeant, ut præpositum superbo tumore contemnant. Sic de ecclesia receditur, sic altare profanum foris collocatur, sic contra pacem Christi, atque unitatem Dei rebellatur. *Cypr. Ep.* 65.

[h] Τοῦτο πάντων τῶν κακῶν αἴτιον, ὅτι τὰ τῶν ἀρχόντων ἠφανίσθη, ἀδεμία αἰδὼς οὐδεὶς φόβος, &c. *Chrys. in 2 Tim. Or.* 2.

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of princes, of nobles, of bishops and priests!) what miserable oppressions, extortions, and rapines! what execrable seditions and rebellions! what barbarous animosities and feuds! what abominable treasons, sacrileges, perjuries, blasphemies! what horrible violations of all justice and honesty! And what, I pray, was the source of these things? where did they begin? where but at murmuring against, at rejecting, at persecuting the spiritual governors, at casting down and trampling on their authority, at slighting and spurning at their advice? Surely would men have observed the laws, or have hearkened to the counsels of those grave and sober persons, whom God had appointed to direct them, they never would have run into the commission of such enormities.

It is not to be omitted, that, in the present state of things, the guilt of disobedience to spiritual governors is increased and aggravated by the supervenient guilt of another disobedience to the laws of our prince and country. Before the secular powers (unto whom God hath committed the dispensation of justice, with the maintenance of peace and order, in reference to worldly affairs) did submit to our Lord, and became *nursing parents of the Church*, the power of managing ecclesiastical matters did wholly reside in spiritual guides; unto whom Christians, as the *peculiar* subjects of God, were obliged willingly to yield obedience; and refusing it, were guilty before God of spiritual disorder, faction, or schism: but now, after that political authority (out of pious zeal for God's service, out of a wise care to prevent the influences of disorder in spiritual matters upon the temporal peace, out of grateful return for the advantages the commonwealth enjoyeth from religion and the Church) hath pleased to back and fortify the laws of spiritual governors by civil sanctions, the knot of our obligation is tied faster, its force is redoubled, we by disobedience incur a double guilt, and offend God two ways, both as supreme governor of the world, and as king of the Church; to our schism against the Church, we add rebellion against our prince, and so become no less bad citizens than bad

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Christians. Some may perhaps imagine their disobedience hence more excusable, taking themselves now only thereby to transgress a political sanction: but (beside that even that were a great offence, the command of our temporal governors being sufficient, out of conscience to God's express will, to oblige us in all things not evidently repugnant to God's law) it is a great mistake to think the civil law doth anywise derogate from the ecclesiastical; that doth not swallow this up, but succoureth and corroborateth it; their concurrence yieldeth an accession of weight and strength to each; they do not by conspiring to prescribe the same thing either of them cease to be governors, as to right; but in efficacy the authority of both should thence be augmented, seeing the obligation to obedience is multiplied upon their subjects; and to disobey them is now two crimes, which otherwise should be but one.

SERMON LVIII.

OF OBEDIENCE TO OUR SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND GOVERNORS.

HEB. xiii. 17.

Obey them that have the rule over you.

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SUCH is the nature of this duty, and such are the reasons enforcing the practice thereof: I shall only farther remove two impediments of that practice, and so leave this point.

1. One hindrance of obedience is this, that spiritual power is not despotical or compulsory, but parental or pastoral; that it hath no external force to abet it, or to avenge disobedience to its laws: they must not *κατεξουσιάζειν*, or *κατακυριεύειν*, (be imperious, or domineer,) they are not allowed to exercise violence, or to inflict bodily correction [a]; but must rule in meek and gentle ways, directly influential upon the mind and conscience, (ways of rational persuasion, exhortation, admonition, reproof,) *in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; convincing, rebuking, exhorting with all long-suffering and doctrine;* their word is their only weapon, their force of argument all the constraint they apply: hence men commonly do not stand in awe of them, nor are so sensible of

Matt. xx. 25. Luke xxii. 26. 1 Pet. v. 3.

2 Tim. ii. 25. iv. 2. 1 Tim. iii. 3.

[a] Μάλιστα γὰρ ἁπάντων Χριστιανοῖς οὐκ ἐφεῖται πρὸς βίαν ἐπανορθοῦν τὰ τῶν ἁμαρτανόντων πταίσματα, &c. *Chrys. de Sacerd.* 2.

Ἐνταῦθα οὐ βιαζόμενον, ἀλλὰ πείθοντα δεῖ ποιεῖν ἀμείνω τὸν τοιοῦτον. *Ibid.*

their obligation to obey them; they cannot understand why they should be frighted by words, or controlled by an unarmed authority.

But this in truth (things being duly considered) is so far from diminishing our obligation, or arguing the authority of our governors to be weak and precarious, that it rendereth our obligation much greater, and their authority more dreadful; for the sweeter and gentler their way of governing is, the more disingenuous and unworthy a thing it is to disobey it; not to be persuaded by reason, not to be allured by kindness, not to admit friendly advice, not to comply with the calmest methods of furthering our own good, is a brutish thing; he that only can be scared and scourged to duty, scarce deserveth the name of a man: it therefore doth the more oblige us, that in this way we are moved to action by love rather than fear. Yet if we would fear wisely and justly, (not like children, being frighted with formidable shapes and appearances, but like men, apprehending the real consequences of things,) we should the more fear these spiritual powers, because they are insensible: for that God hath commanded us to obey them, without assigning visible forces to constrain or chastise, is a manifest argument that he hath reserved the vindication of their authority to his own hand, which therefore will be infallibly certain, and terribly severe; so the nature of the case requireth, and so God hath declared it shall be: the sentence that is upon earth pronounced by his ministers upon contumacious offenders, he hath declared himself ready to ratify in heaven, and therefore most assuredly will execute it. As under the old law God appointed to the transgression of some laws, upon which he laid special stress, the punishment of *being cut off from his people;* the execution of which punishment he reserved to himself, to be accomplished in his own way and time; so doth he now in like manner take upon him to maintain the cause of his ministers, and to execute the judgments decreed by them; and if so, we may consider that *it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* Ecclesiastical autho-

Matt. xviii. 18.

Heb. x. 31.

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rity therefore is not a shadow, void of substance or force, but hath the greatest power in the world to support and assert it; it hath arms to maintain it most effectual and forcible, (those of which St. Paul saith; *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God,*—) it inflicteth chastisements far more dreadful than any secular power can inflict; for these only touch the body, those pierce the soul; these concern only our temporal state, those reach eternity itself; these at most yield a transitory smart, or kill the body, those produce endless torment, and (utterly as to all comfort in being) destroy the soul.

2 Cor. x. 4.

Spiritali gladio superbi et contumaces necantur, dum de ecclesia ejiciuntur. *Cypr. Ep.* 61.

The punishment for extreme contumacy is called *delivery to Satan;* and is not this far worse than to be put into the hands of any gaoler or hangman? what are any cords of hemp or fetters of iron, in comparison to those bands, of which it is said, *Whatever ye bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven;* which engage the soul in a guilt never to be loosed, except by sore contrition and serious repentance? what are any scourges to St. Paul's rod, lashing the heart and conscience with stinging remorse? what any axes or falchions to that *sword of the spirit*, which cutteth off a member from the body of Christ? what are any fagots and torches to that unquenchable *fire and brimstone* of the infernal lake? what, in fine, doth any condemnation here signify to that horrible curse, which devoteth an incorrigible soul to the bottomless pit?

It is therefore indeed a great advantage to this power that it is spiritual.

2. Another grand obstruction to the practice of this duty is, pretence to scruple about the lawfulness, or dissatisfaction in the expedience of that which our governors prescribe; that we are able to advance objections against their decrees; that we can espy inconveniences ensuing upon their orders; that we imagine the constitution may be reformed, so as to become more pure, more convenient and comely, more serviceable to edification; that we cannot fancy that to be best, which they enjoin: for removing this obstruction let me only propound some questions.

Cypr. Ep. 50. 52. (p. 97.)

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Were not any government appointed in vain, if such pretences might exempt or excuse from conformity to its orders? Can such ever be wanting? Is there any thing deviseable, which may not be impugned by some plausible reason, which may not disgust a squeamish humour? Is there any matter so clearly innocent, the lawfulness whereof a weak mind will not question; any thing so firm and solid, in which a small acuteness of wit cannot pick a hole; any thing so indisputably certain, that whoever affecteth to cavil may not easily devise some objections against it?

Φιλοίνοις οίνος ὁ λεῖπα, ἀδὶ φιλόνεικφ μάχη. *Socr. Hist.* vii. 13.

Is there any thing here that hath no inconveniences attending it? are not in all human things conveniences and inconveniences so mixed and complicated, that it is impossible to disentangle and sever them; can there be any constitution under heaven so absolutely pure and perfect, that no blemish or defect shall appear therein? can any providence of man foresee, any care prevent, any industry remedy all inconveniences possible? Is a reformation satisfactory to all fancies anywise practicable; and are they not fitter to live in the Platonic idea of a commonwealth than in any real society, who press for such an one? To be facile and complaisant in other cases, bearing with things which do not please us, is esteemed commendable, a courteous and humane practice: why should it not be much more reasonable to condescend to our superiors, and comport with their practice? is it not very discourteous to deny them the respect which we allow to others, or to refuse that advantage to public transactions which we think fit to grant unto private conversation?

To what purpose did God institute a government, if the resolutions thereof must be suspended till every man is satisfied with them; or if its state must be altered so often as any man can pick in it matter of offence or dislike; or if the proceedings thereof must be shaped according to the numberless varieties of different and repugnant fancies [b]?

[b] Οὐ γὰρ μόνον τὴν ἀρίστην (πολιτείαν) δεῖ θεωρεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν δυνατήν. *Arist. Pol.* iv. 1.

Si ubi jubeantur quærere singulis liceat; pereunte obsequio etiam imperium intercidit. *Tac.* i p. 450. *Otho.*

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Are, I pray, the objections against obedience so clear and cogent, as are the commands which enjoin, and the reasons which enforce it? are the inconveniences adhering to it apparently so grievous, as are the mischiefs which spring from disobedience? do they in a just balance counterpoise the disparagement of authority, the violation of order, the disturbance of peace, the obstruction of edification, which disobedience produceth?

Do the scruples (or reasons, if we will call them so) which we propound, amount to such a strength and evidence, as to outweigh the judgment of those whom God hath authorized by his commission, whom he doth enable by his grace, to instruct and guide us[c]? May not those, whose office it is to judge of such things, whose business it is to study for skill in order to that purpose, who have most experience in those affairs specially belonging to them, be reasonably deemed most able to judge both for themselves and us what is lawful, and what expedient? have they not eyes to see what we do, and hearts to judge concerning the force of our pretences, as well as we?

Qui fidei et veritati præsumus. *Cypr. Ep.* 72.

Is it not a design of their office to resolve our doubts and void our scruples in such cases, that we may act securely and quietly, being directed by better judgments than our own? Are they not strictly obliged in conscience, are they not deeply engaged by interest, to govern us in the best manner? Is it therefore wisdom, is it modesty, is it justice for us to advance our private conceits against their most deliberate public resolutions? may we not in so doing mistake? may we not be blind or weak, (not to say fond, or proud, or perverse?) and shall those defects or defaults of ours evacuate so many commands of God, and render his so noble, so needful an ordinance quite insignificant?

Do we especially seem to be in earnest, or appear other-

[c] Dixisti sane scrupulum tibi esse tollendum de animo, in quem incidisti; Incidisti sed tua credulitate irreligiosa, &c. *Cypr. Ep.* 69. (ad Florent.) vid optime et appotsie de hac re disserentem.

wise than illusively to palliate our naughty affections and sinister respects, when we ground the justification of our nonconformity upon dark subtilties and intricate quirks; which it is hard to conceive that we understand ourselves, and whereof very perspicacious men cannot apprehend the force? Do we think we shall be innocent men, because we are smart sophisters? or that God will excuse from our duty, because we can perplex men with our discourses? or that we are bound to do nothing, because we are able to say somewhat against all things?

Would we not do well to consider what huge danger they incur, and how massy a load of guilt they must undergo, upon whom shall be charged all those sad disorders and horrid mischiefs which are naturally consequent on disobedience? What if confusion of things, if corruption of manners, if oppression of truth, if dissolution of the Church do thence ensue; what a case then shall we be in, who confer so much thereto? Would not such considerations be apt to beget scruples far more disquieting an honest and truly conscientious mind, than any such either profound subtilties or superficial plausibilities can do, which dissenters are wont to allege? For needeth he not to have extreme reason (reason extremely strong and evident) who dareth to refuse that obedience which God so plainly commandeth; by which his own authority is maintained; on which the safety, prosperity, and peace of the church dependeth; in which the support of religion, and the welfare of numberless souls is deeply concerned?

Did, let me farther ask, the Apostles, when they settled orders in the church, when they imposed what they conceived needful for edification and decency, when they inflicted spiritual chastisements upon disorderly walkers, regard such pretences? or had those self-conceited and self-willed people (who *obeyed* not their *words*, but *resisted* and rejected them) no such pretences? had they nothing, think we, to say for themselves, nothing to object against the apostolic orders and proceedings? They had surely; they failed not to find faults in the establishment; and to pretend

2 Tim. iv. 15. 1 Tim. i. 20. 2 Thess iii. 14, 6.

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a kind of tender conscience for their disobedience; yet this hindered not, but that the Apostles condemned their misbehaviour and inflicted severe censures upon them?

Did not also the primitive bishops (and all spiritual governors down from the beginning every where almost to these days of contention and disorder) proceed in the same course; not fearing to enact such laws concerning indifferent matters and circumstances of religion, as seemed to them conducible to the good of the Church? Did not all good people readily comply with their orders, how painful soever, or disagreeable to flesh and blood, without contest or scruple? yet had not they as much wit, and no less conscience than ourselves? They who had wisdom enough to descry the truth of our religion through all the clouds of obloquy and disgrace, which it lay under: who had zeal and constancy to bear the hardest brunts of persecution against it; were they such fools as to see no fault, so stupid as to resent nothing, or so loose as to comply with any thing? No surely; they were in truth so wise as to know their duty, and so honest as to observe it.

If these considerations will not satisfy, I have done; and proceed to the next point of our duty, to which the precept in our text may extend, concerning the doctrine of our guides: in which respect it may be conceived to imply the following particulars to be performed by us, as instances, or parts, or degrees thereof.

1. We should readily and gladly address ourselves to hear them; not out of profane and wilful contempt or slothful negligence declining to attend upon their instructions; there were of old those, of whom the Prophets complain, who would not so much as hearken to the words of those whom God sent unto them; but stopped their ears, *withdrew the shoulder, and hardened the neck, and would not hear:* there were those in the evangelical times, who did ἀπωθεῖν τὸν λόγον, *thrust away the word of God, judging themselves unworthy of eternal life; who would not admit or hear the word of life*, and overtures of grace propounded by the Apostles: there were Gadarenes, who beseeched our Lord himself to depart from their coasts: there

Neh. ix. 29. Prov. i. 24. Is. lxv. 12. lxvi. 4. Jer. vii. 13. vi. 10. Acts xiii. 46. Matt. x. 14.

Luke viii. 37.

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have always been *deaf adders, who stop their ears to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely;* no wonder then if now there be those who will not so much as allow a hearing to the messengers of God, and the guides of their soul: some out of a factious prejudice against their office, or their persons, or their way, do shun them, giving themselves over to the conduct of seducers; some out of a profane neglect of all religion, out of being wholly possessed with worldly cares and desires, out of stupidity and sloth, (indisposing them to mind any thing that is serious,) will not afford them any regard: all these are extremely blameable, offensive to God, and injurious to themselves. It is a heinous affront to God (implying an hostile disposition toward him, an unwillingness to have any correspondence with him) to refuse so much as audience to his ambassadors; it is an interpretative repulsing him; so of old he expressed it; *I*, saith he, *spake unto you, rising early and speaking, but ye heard not; I called you, but ye answered not:* so under the Gospel; *He*, saith our Lord, *that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth* (or regardeth not) *you despiseth me;* and, *We are ambassadors of Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God.* It is a starving our souls, depriving them of that food which God hath provided for them; it is keeping ourselves at distance from any means or possibility of being well informed and quickened to the practice of our duty, of being reclaimed from our errors and sins: it is the way to become hardened in impiety, or sinking into a reprobate sense. This is the first step to obedience; for *how can we believe, except we hear?* this is that which St. James urgeth, *Let every man be quick to hear;* and which St. Peter thus enjoineth, *Like new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby:* we should especially be quick and ready to hear those whom God hath authorised and appointed to speak; we should *desire to suck the milk of the word* from those who are our spiritual parents and nurses.

Psal. lviii. 4, 5.

Jer. vii. 13.

Luke x. 16.

2 Cor. v. 20.

Jam. i. 19.

1 Pet. ii. 2.

2. We should hear them with serious, earnest attention

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and consideration; so that we may well understand, may be able to weigh, may retain in memory, and may become duly affected with their discourses; we must not hear them drowsily and slightly, as if we were nothing concerned, or were hearing an impertinent tale; their word should not pass through the ears, and slip away without effect; but sink into the understanding, into the memory, into the heart; like

Matt. xiii. 5. *the good seed* falling into *a depth of earth*, able to afford it root and nourishment: therefore we must attend diligently

Heb. ii. 1. thereto: περισσοτέρως οὖν δεῖ προσέχειν, *we should therefore give more abundant heed*, as the Apostle saith, *to the things we hear, lest at any time we should let them slip.* This duty

1 Thess. ii. 13. the nature and importance of their word requireth: *it is the word not of men*, but, *in truth, the word* of the great *God*, (his word as proceeding from him, as declaring his mind and will, as tendering his overtures of grace and mercy,) which as such challengeth great regard and awe; it informeth us of our chief duties, it furthereth our main interests, it guideth us into, it urgeth us forward in the

Jam. i. 21. way to eternal happiness; it is the word that is *able to save our souls*, to *render us wise unto salvation*; it therefore claimeth and deserveth from us most earnest attention; it is a great indignity and folly not to yield it.

3. We should to their instructions bring good dispositions of mind, such as may render them most effectual and fruitful to us; such as are right intention, candour, docility, meekness.

We should not be induced to hear them out of curiosity, (as *having itching ears*,) being desirous to hear *some new things*, some fine notions, some taking discourse; somewhat to fancy or talk pleasantly about, (as the

Acts xvii. 21. Athenians heard St. Paul;) not out of censoriousness, or inclination to criticize and find fault, (as the Pharisees heard

Luke xi. 54. our Saviour, *laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him*;) not out of design to gratify our passions in hearing them, to reprove other persons, or for any such corrupt and sinister intention; but altogether out of pure design that

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we may be improved in knowledge, and excited to the practice of our duty.

We should not come to hear them with minds imbued with ill prejudices and partial affections, which may obstruct the virtue and efficacy of their discourse, or may hinder us from judging fairly and truly about what they say; but with such freedom and ingenuity as may dispose us readily to yield unto and acquiesce in any profitable truth declared by them; like the generous Bereans, who *received the word* Acts xvii. *μετὰ πάσης προθυμίας, with all* alacrity and *readiness of mind,* 11. *searching the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so; ὡς ἀρτιγέννητα βρέφη, like infants newly born,* that come to 1 Pet. ii. 2. the dug without any other inclination than to suck what is needful for their sustenance.

We should be docile and tractable, willing and apt to learn, shaking off all those indispositions of soul (all dulness and sluggishness, all peevishness and perverseness, all pride and self-conceitedness, all corrupt affection and indulgence to our conceits, our humours, our passions, our lusts and inordinate desires) which may obstruct our understanding of the word, our yielding assent to it, our receiving impression from it: there were those, concerning whom the Apostle said, that he could not proceed in his discourse, because they were *νωθροὶ ταῖς ἀκοαῖς, dull of* Heb. v. 11. *hearing,* (or sluggish in hearing,) who were indisposed to (1 Cor. iii. 2.) hear, and uncapable to understand, because they would not be at the pains to rouse up their fancies, and fix their minds upon a serious consideration of things: there were those, who had *a spirit of slumber, eyes not to see, and ears* Isa. xxix. *not to hear;* who *did hear with the ear, but not under-* 10. Rom. xi. 8. *stand; seeing did see, but not perceive; for their heart had* Isa. vi. 9. *waxed gross, their ears were dull of hearing, and their* Acts xxviii. 26. *eyes were closed;* such indocile persons there always have John xii. been, who, being stupified and perverted by corrupt affec- 40. tions, became uncapable of bettering from good instruction: all such we should strive to free ourselves from, that we may perform this duty to our guides, and *in meekness* Jam. i. 21. *receive the engrafted word.*

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These practices (of hearing, of attending, of coming well disposed to instruction) are at least steps and degrees necessarily prerequisite to the obedience prescribed; and farther to press them all together upon us, we may consider, that it is strictly incumbent on them (under danger of heavy punishment and *woe*) *willingly*, earnestly, with all diligence and patience, to *labour* in teaching and admonishing us; they must *give attendance*, and *take heed unto their doctrine*, that it may be *sound* and profitable; they *must preach the word*, and *be instant* upon it *in season, out of season*, (that is, not only taking, but seeking and snatching all occasions to do it,) *reproving, rebuking, exhorting with all long suffering and doctrine;* they *must warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom, that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:* as they are obliged in such manner to do these things, so there must be correspondent duties lying upon us, to receive their doctrine readily, carefully, patiently, sincerely, and fairly: as they must be faithful dispensers of God's heavenly truth and holy mysteries, so we must be obsequious entertainers of them: imposing such commands on them doth imply reciprocal obligations in their hearers and scholars; otherwise their office would be vain, and their endeavours fruitless; God no less would be frustrated in his design, than we should be deprived of the advantages of their institution.

1 Cor. ix. 16. 2 Cor. v. 14. 1 Pet. v. 2. Rom. xii. 3. 1 Tim. v. 17. 1 Tim. iv. 13, 16. 2 Tim. iv. 2. Col. i. 28. 1 Cor. iv. 2.

But farther, it is a more immediate ingredient of this duty, that

4. We should effectually be enlightened by their doctrine, be convinced by their arguments persuading truth and duty, be moved by their admonitions and exhortations to good practice; we should open our eyes to the light which they shed forth upon us, we should surrender our judgment to the proofs which they allege, we should yield our hearts and affections pliable to their mollifying and warming discourses; it is their part to subdue our minds to *the obedience of faith*, and to subject our wills to the observance of God's commandments, (*casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the*

2 Cor. x. 5.

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knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;) it must therefore answerably be our duty not to resist, not to hold out, not to persist obstinate in our errors or prejudices; to submit our minds to the power of truth, being willingly and gladly conquered by it; it must be our duty to subjugate our wills, to bend our inclinations, to form our affections to a free compliance of heart with the duties urged upon us; we should not be like those disciples, of whom our Lord complaineth thus; *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:* nor like the Jews, with whom St. Stephen thus expostulates; *Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.* They should speak with power and efficacy; we therefore should not by our indispositions (by obstinacy of conceit or hardness of heart) obstruct their endeavours: they should be *co-workers of your joy,* (that is, working in us that faith and those virtues, which are productive of true joy and comfort to us;) we therefore should co-work with them toward the same end: they should edify us in knowledge and holiness; we should therefore yield ourselves to be fashioned and polished by them.

Luke xxiv. 25. Acts vii. 51. 1 Cor. iv. 20. ii. 4. 2 Cor. i. 24. 1 Cor. iii. 5.

5. We should, in fine, obey their doctrine by conforming our practice thereto; this our Lord prescribed in regard even to the Jewish guides and doctors, *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do;* the same we may well conceive that he requireth in respect to his own ministers, the teachers of a better law, authorized to direct us by his own commission, and thereto more specially qualified by his grace: this is indeed the crown and completion of all; to hear signifieth nothing; to be convinced in our mind, and to be affected in our heart, will but aggravate our guilt, if we neglect practice: every sermon we hear, that sheweth us our duty, will in effect be an inditement upon us, will ground a sentence of condemnation, if we transgress it; for, as *the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dress-*

Matt. xxiii. 2, 3. Heb. vi. 7, 8. x. 26.

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ed, receiveth blessing from God, so that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, and its end is to be burned. and, *Not the hearers of the law are just with God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.* And it is a good advice, that of St. James, *Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves;* it is, he intimateth, a fallacy some are apt to put upon themselves, to conceit they have done sufficiently when they have lent an ear to the word; this is the least part to be done in regard to it, practice is all in all; what is it to be shewed the way, and to know it exactly, if we do not walk in it, if we do not by it arrive to our journey's end, the salvation of our souls? To have waited upon our Lord himself, and hung upon his discourse, was not available; for when in the day of account some shall begin to allege, *We have eaten and drunk before thee, and thou hast taught in our streets; our Lord will say, I know you not, whence are ye; depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.* And it is our Lord's declaration in the case, *Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock;—but every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand.*

Rom. ii. 13.

Jam. i. 22.

Luke xiii. 26, 27.

Matt. vii. 24.

(John xiv. 21.)

Many are very earnest to hear, they *hear gladly*, as Herod did St. John Baptist's homilies; they *receive the word with joy*, as the *temporary believers* in the parable did; they do, as those men did in the Prophet, *delight to know God's ways, do ask of God the ordinances of justice, do take delight in approaching God;* or as those in another Prophet, *who speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come I pray you, and hear, what is the word that cometh forth from the Lord: and they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but will not do them; for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness: and, lo, thou art to them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and*

Mark vi. 20.

Matt. xiii. 20.

Is. lviii. 2.

Ezek. xxxiii. 30, 31, 32.

can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, SERM. LVIII.
but they do them not: they for a time *rejoice in the light of* John v. 35.
God's messengers, as those Jews did in the light of that *burning and shining lamp*, St. John the Baptist; but all comes to nothing; but they are backward and careless to perform, at least more than they please themselves, or what suiteth to their fancy, their humour, their appetite, their interest: many hearers will believe only what they like, or what suiteth to their prejudices and passions; many of what they believe will practise that only which sorteth with their temper, or will serve their designs; they cannot conform to unpleasant and unprofitable doctrines: sometimes care choketh the word; sometimes temptation of pleasure, of profit, of honour allureth; sometimes difficulties, hazards, persecutions, discourage from obedience to it.

These particulars are obvious, and by most will be consented to; there is one point which perhaps will more hardly be admitted, which therefore I shall more largely insist upon; it is this:

6. That as in all cases it is our duty to defer much regard to the opinion of our guides, so in some cases it behoveth us to rely barely upon their judgment and advice; those especially among them who excel in dignity and worth, who are approved for wisdom and integrity; their definitions, or the declarations of their opinion, (especially such as are exhibited upon mature deliberation and debate, in a solemn manner,) are ever very probable arguments of truth and expediency; they are commonly the best arguments which can be had in some matters, especially to the meaner and simpler sort of people. This upon many accounts will appear reasonable.

It is evident to experience, that every man is not capable to judge, or able to guide himself in matters of this nature, (concerning divine truth and conscience.) There are *children* Rom. xiv. 1. xv. 1, &c. xvi 18. *in understanding;* there are men *weak in faith*, (or knowledge concerning the faith;) there are *idiots*, ἄτακτοι, 1 Cor. xiv. 16. iii. 2. viii. 10. (men not bad, but *simple*,) persons *occupying the room of the unlearned, unskilful in the word of righteousness*, who,

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as the Apostle saith, *need that one should teach them which be the first principles of the oracles of God.*

Heb. v. 12. Vulgo non judicium, non veritas. *Tuc.* Ἄκριτον ὁ ὄχλος. *M. Ant.*

The vulgar sort of men are as undiscerning and injudicious in all things, so peculiarly in matters of this nature, so much abstracted from common sense and experience; whence we see them easily seduced into the fondest conceits and wildest courses by any slender artifice or fair pretence; *like children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every* Eph. iv. 14. *wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*

There are also some particular cases, a competent information and skill in which must depend upon improvements of mind acquired by more than ordinary study and experience; so that in them most people do want sufficient means of attaining knowledge requisite to guide their judgment or their practice; and for such persons in such cases it is plainly the best, the wisest, and the safest way, to rely upon the direction of their guides, assenting to what they declare, acting what they prescribe, going whither they conduct [d].

The very notion of guides, and the design of their office, doth import a difference of knowledge, and a need of reliance upon them in such cases: it signifieth, that we are in some measure ignorant of the way, and that they better know it; and if so, plain reason dictateth it fit that we should follow them: and indeed what need were there of guides, to what purpose should we have them, if we can sufficiently ken the way, and judge what we should do, without them?

In the state of learning, (in which the assigning us teachers supposeth us placed,) whatever our capacity may be, yet our judgment at least (for want of a full comprehension of things, which must be discovered in order and by degrees) is imperfect: in that state therefore it becometh us not to pretend exercise of judgment, but rather easily to

[d] Ἀλλ' εἰδότες ἑτέροις βέλτιον εἶναι τὰς ἑαυτῶν ἡνίας ἐνδιδόναι τεχνικωτέροις, ἢ ἀλλων ἡνιόχους εἶναι ἀνεπιστήμονας, ἐξ ἀκοὴν ὑποτιθέναι μᾶλλον εὐγνώμονα, ἢ γλῶσσαν κινεῖν ἀταΐδευτον. *Naz. Or.* 1.

——fide calidus, et virtute robustus, &c. *Cypr. Ep.* 23. *de Luciano.*

yield assent to what our teachers, who see farther into the thing, do assert; *The learner*, as Seneca saith, *is bound to be ruled, while he beginneth to be able to rule himself.*

Regi debet, dum incipit se posse regere. *Sen. Ep.* 94.

Δεῖ μανθάνοντα πιστεύειν, *A learner should in some measure be credulous;* otherwise, as he will often fail in his judgment, so he will make little progress in learning; for if he will admit nothing on his master's word, if he will question all things, if he will continually be doubting and disputing, or contradicting and opposing his teacher, how can instruction proceed? He that presently will be his own master is a bad scholar, and will be a worse master. He that will fly before he is fledged, no wonder if he tumble down.

There are divers obvious and very considerable cases in which persons most contemptuous of authority, and refractory toward their guides, are constrained to rely upon the judgment of others, and are contented to do it, their conscience shewing them unable to judge for themselves: in admitting the literal sense of Scripture, according to translations; in the interpretation of difficult places, depending upon the skill of languages, grammar, and criticism, upon the knowledge of human arts and sciences, upon histories and ancient customs: in such cases, all illiterate persons (however otherwise diffident and disregardful of authority) are forced to see with the eyes of other men, to submit their judgment to the skill and fidelity of their learned guides, taking the very principles and foundations of their religion upon trust: and why then consonantly may they not do it in other cases; especially in the resolution of difficult, sublime, obscure, and subtile points, the comprehension whereof transcendeth their capacity?

SERMON LIX.

OF OBEDIENCE TO OUR SPIRITUAL GUIDES AND GOVERNORS.

HEB. xiii. 17.

Obey them that have the rule over you.

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BUT farther,

The more to engage and incline us to the performing this part of our duty, (the regarding, prizing, confiding in the judgment of our guides,) we may consider the great advantages, both natural and supernatural, which they have to qualify them in order to such purposes.

1. They may reasonably be presumed more intelligent and skilful in divine matters than others; for as they have the same natural capacities and endowments with others, (or rather commonly somewhat better than others, as being designed and selected to this sort of employment,) so their natural abilities are by all possible means improved: it is their trade and faculty, unto which their education is directed; in acquiring ability toward which they spend their time, their care, their pains; in which they are continually versed and exercised, (*having*, as the Apostle speaketh, *by reason of use their senses exercised to discern both good and evil;*) for which also they employ their supplications and devotions to God.

Many special advantages they hence procure, needful or very conducible to a more perfect knowledge of such matters, and to security from errors; such as are conversing with

studies, which enlarge a man's mind, and improve his judgment; a skill of disquisition about things; of sifting and canvassing points coming under debate; of weighing the force of arguments, and distinguishing the colours of things; the knowledge of languages, in which the divine oracles are expressed; of sciences, of histories, of practices serving to the discovery and illustration of the truth; exercise in meditation, reading, writing, speaking, disputing, and conference, whereby the mind is greatly enlightened, and the reason strengthened; acquaintance with variety of learned authors, who with great diligence have expounded the holy Scriptures, and with most accuracy discussed points of doctrine; especially with ancient writers, who, living near the apostolical times, and being immediately (or within few degrees mediately) their disciples, may justly be supposed most helpful toward informing us what was their genuine doctrine, what the true sense of their writings: by such means as in other faculties, so in this of theology, a competent skill may be obtained; there is no other ordinary or probable way; and no extraordinary way can be trusted, now that men appear not to grow learned or wise by special inspiration or miracle; after that all pretences to such by-ways have been detected of imposture, and do smell too rank of hypocrisy.

Since then our guides are so advantageously qualified to direct us, it is in matters difficult and doubtful (the which require good measure of skill and judgment to determine about them) most reasonable that we should rely upon their authority, preferring it in such cases to our private discretion; taking it for more probable that they should comprehend the truth than we (unassisted by them, and judging merely by our own glimmering light) can do; deeming it good odds on the side of their doctrine against our opinion or conjecture.

They have also another peculiar advantage toward judging sincerely of things, by their greater retirement from the world and disengagement from secular interests; the which ordinarily do deprave the understandings and pervert the

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judgments of men, disposing them to accommodate their conceits to the maxims of worldly policy, or to the vulgar apprehensions of men, many of which are false and base: by such abstraction of mind from worldly affairs, together with fastening their meditation on the best things (which their calling necessarily doth put them upon) more than is usual to other men, they commonly get principles and habits of simplicity and integrity, which qualify men both to discern truth better, and more faithfully to declare it.

2 Tim. ii. 4.

Seeing then in every faculty the advice of the skilful is to be regarded, and is usually relied upon; and in other affairs of greatest importance we scruple not to proceed so; seeing we commit our life and health (which are most precious to us) to the physician, observing his prescriptions commonly without any reason, sometimes against our own sense; we intrust our estate, which is so dear, with the lawyer, not contesting his advice; we put our goods and safety into the hands of a pilot, sleeping securely whilst he steereth us as he thinketh fit: seeing in many such occasions of common life we advisedly do renounce or wave our own opinions, absolutely yielding to the direction of others, taking their authority for a better argument or ground of action than any which our conceit or a bare consideration of the matter can suggest to us; admitting this maxim for good, that it is a more advisable and safe course in matters of consequence to follow the judgment of wiser men than to adhere to our own apprehensions[a]: seeing it is not wisdom (as every man thinks) in a doubtful case to act upon disadvantage, or to venture upon odds against himself, and it is plainly doing thus to act upon our own opinion against the judgment of those who are more improved in the way, or better studied in the point than ourselves; seeing in other

[a] Ὃν ἂν ἡγήσωνται περὶ τὰ συμφέροντα ἑαυτοῖς φρονιμώτερον ἑαυτῶν εἶναι, τούτῳ ἀνθρωποι ὑπερηδέως πείθονται. *Xen. Pæd.* l.

Ἐν μὲν τῷ πλεῖν πείθεσθαι δεῖ τῷ κυβερνήτῃ, ἐν δὲ τῷ ζῆν τῷ λογίζεσθαι δυναμένῳ βέλτιον. *Aristonymus apud Stob.* tom. ii. tit. 3.

cases these are the common approved apprehensions and practices; and seeing in this case there is plainly the same reason, for that there are difficulties and intricacies in this no less than in other faculties, which need good skill to resolve them; for that in these matters we may easily slip, and by error may incur huge danger and damage: why then should we not here take the same course, following (when no other clearer light, or prevalent reason occurreth) the conduct and advice of our more skilful guides? especially considering, that, beside ordinary, natural, and acquired advantages, they have other supernatural both obligations to the well discharging this duty, and assistances toward it: For,

2. We may consider, that they are by God appointed and empowered to instruct and guide us: it is their special office, not assumed by themselves, or constituted by human prudence, but ordained and settled by divine wisdom for our edification in knowledge, and direction in practice [b]: they are God's messengers, purposely sent by him, selected and *separated* by his instinct *for this work:* they are by him *given for the perfecting of the saints, and edifying the body of Christ:* it is by God's warrant, and in his name that they speak; which giveth especial weight to their words, and no mean ground of assurance to us in relying upon them: for who is more likely to know God's mind and will, who may be presumed more faithful in declaring them, than God's own officers and agents? those whose great duty, whose main concernment it is to speak not their own sense, but the word of God? They are God's mouth, by whom alone ordinarily he expresseth his mind and pleasure; by whom *he entreateth us to be reconciled* in heart and practice to him: what they say therefore is to be received as God's word, except plain reason upon due examination do forbid.

Rom. x. 15. Acts xiii. 2. Eph. iv. 11, 12. 1 Cor. xii. 28. 1 Tim. i. 11, 12. ii. 7. Tit. i 3. 1 Thess. ii. 4. 2 Cor. v. 20.

If they by office are teachers, or masters in doctrine, then we answerably must in obligation be disciples, which

[b] Jer. iii. 15. I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. *Cypr. Ep.* 55.

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implies admitting their doctrine and proficiency in knowledge thereby: if they are appointed shepherds, then must we be their sheep, to be led and fed by them; if they are God's messengers, we must yield some credence, and embrace the message uttered by them; so the Prophet telleth us: *The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts:* so the law of old enjoined;—*According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do; thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand nor to the left:* so our Lord also, in regard to the Scribes and Pharisees, saith, *The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses's chair: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do;* upon account of their office, whatever they direct to (not repugnant to the divine law) was to be observed by the people; and surely in doubtful cases, when upon competent inquiry no clear light offereth itself, it cannot be very dangerous to follow their guidance whom God hath appointed and authorized to lead us; if we err doing so, we err wisely in the way of our duty, and so no great blame will attend our error.

Mal. ii. 7.

Deut. xvii. 11.

Matt. xxiii. 2, 3.

(Ezek. xxxiv. 16.)

3. We may consider that our guides as such have special assistance from God; to every vocation God's aid is congruously afforded; but to this (the principal of all others, the most important, most nearly related to God, and most peculiarly tending to his service) it is in a special manner most assuredly and plentifully imparted.

They are *stewards of God's various grace;* and they who dispense grace to others cannot want it themselves: they are *co-operators with God,* and God consequently doth co-operate with them; it is God who doth *ἱκανῶν, render them sufficient to be ministers of the New Testament;* and they *minister of the ability which God supplieth;* every spiritual labourer is obliged to say with St. Paul, *By the grace of God I am what I am—I have laboured, yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me.*

1 Pet. iv. 10.

1 Cor. iii. 9.

2 Cor. iii. 5.

Phil. ii 13.

1 Pet iv. 11.

1 Cor. xv. 10.

God's having *given them,* as St. Paul saith, to the

Eph. iv. 11, 12.

Church, doth imply that God hath endowed them with special ability, and furthereth them (in their conscionable discharge of their ministry) with aid requisite to the designs of *perfecting the saints, and edifying the body* in knowledge, in virtue, in piety. SERM. LIX. 1 Cor. xii. 28.

As the Holy Ghost doth constitute them in their charge, (according to that of St. Paul in the Acts, *Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,*) so questionless he doth enable and assist them in administering their function. There is *a gift* (of spiritual ability and divine succour) imparted by their consecration to this office, with *the laying on the hands of the presbytery*, joined with humble supplications for them, and solemn benedictions in God's name upon them. The divine Spirit, which *distributeth, as he seeth good, unto every member of the Church* needful supplies of grace, doth *bestow* on them in competent measure *the word of wisdom* and the *word of knowledge* requisite for their employment. Acts xx. 28. 1 Tim. iv. 14. 2 Tim. i. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 7, &c. Eph. iv. 16. Rom. xii. 5, 6.

God of old did in extraordinary ways visibly communicate his Spirit unto his prophets and agents: the same he did liberally pour out upon the Apostles, and first planters of the Gospel; the same questionless he hath not withdrawn from those, who under the evangelical dispensation (which is peculiarly the *ministration of the Spirit*, unto which the aid of God's Spirit is most proper and most needful) do still by a settled ministry supply the room of those extraordinary ministers; but imparteth it to them in a way although more ordinary and occult, yet no less real and effectual, according to proportions answerable to the exigencies of need and occasion; and by the influence hereof upon the pastors of his Church it is, that our Lord accomplisheth his promise to be *with it until the end of the world.* 2 Cor. iii. 8. Matt. xxviii. 20.

Clavis scientiæ, the key of knowledge spiritual, is one of those keys which he hath given to them, whereby they are enabled to open the kingdom of heaven. Luke xi. 52.

Great reason therefore we have to place an especial confidence in their direction; for whom can we more safely

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follow than those whom (upon such grounds of divine declarations and promises) we may hope that God doth guide; so that consequently in following them we do in effect follow God himself? *He that heareth you heareth me*, might be said, not only because of their relation unto Christ; but because their word proceedeth from his inspiration, being no other than his mind conveyed through their mouth.

4. We may also for our encouragement to confide in our guides consider, that they are themselves deeply concerned in our being rightly guided; their present comfort, their salvation hereafter depending upon the faithful and careful discharge of their duty herein: they must render an account for it; so that if by their wilful or negligent miscarriage we do fall into dangerous error or sin, they do thence not only forfeit rich and glorious rewards, (assigned to those *who turn many unto righteousness*,) but incur woful punishment; this doth assure their integrity, and render our confidence in them very reasonable: for as we may safely trust a pilot who hath no less interest than ourselves in the safe conveyance of the vessel to port; so may we reasonably confide in their advice whose salvation is adventured with ours in the same bottom, or rather is wrapped up and carried in ours: it is not probable they will (at least designedly) misguide us to their own extreme damage, to their utter ruin; *if they do not warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, God hath said that he will require his blood at their hands*; and is it likely they wittingly should run such a hazard, that they should purposely cast away the souls for which they are so certainly accountable? it is our Apostle's enforcement of the precept in our text; *Obey them that guide you; for they watch for your souls as they that must give an account*: which argumentation is not only grounded upon the obligations of ingenuity and gratitude, but also upon considerations of discretion and interests; we should obey our guides in equity and honesty; we may do it advisedly, because they, in regard to their own accounts at the final judgment, are obliged to be careful for the good of our souls.

Ezek. iii. 18. xxxiii. 2, 8.

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Upon these considerations, it is plainly reasonable to follow our guides in all matters wherein we have no other very clear and certain light of reason or revelation to conduct us: the doing so is indeed (which is farther observable) not only wise in itself, but safe in way of prevention, that we be not seduced by other treacherous guides; it will not only secure us from our own weak judgments, but from the frauds of those *who lie in wait to deceive.* The simpler sort of men will in effect be always led, not by their own judgment, but by the authority of others; and if they be not fairly guided by those whom God hath constituted and assigned to that end, they will be led by the nose by those who are concerned to seduce them: so reason dictateth that it must be, so experience sheweth it ever to have been; that the people, whenever they have deserted their true guides, have soon been hurried by impostors into most dangerous errors and extravagant follies; being *carried about with divers and strange doctrines;* being *like children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine.*

Eph. iv. 14.

Heb. xiii. 9. Eph. iv. 14.

It is therefore a great advantage to us, and a great mercy of God, that there are (by God's care) provided for us such helps, upon which we may commonly for our guidance in the way to happiness more safely rely, than upon our own judgments, liable to mistake, and than upon the counsel of others, who may be interested to abuse us; very foolish and very ungrateful we are, if we do not highly prize, if we do not willingly embrace this advantage.

I farther add, that as wisdom may induce, so modesty and humility should dispose us to follow the direction of our guides; *Ye younger,* saith St. Peter, *submit yourselves unto the elder,* (that is, ye inferiors to your superiors, ye that are the flock to your pastors,) *and,* subjoineth he immediately, *be clothed with humility;* signifying, that it is a point of humility to yield that submission; every modest and humble person is apt to distrust his own, and to submit to better judgments; and, *Not to lean to our under-*

1 Pet. v. 5.

Prov. iii. 5, 7.

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standing, not to be wise in our own eyes, not to seem to know any thing, not *to seem any body to oneself, in humility to prefer others before ourselves,* are divine injunctions, chiefly applicable to this case, in reference to our spiritual guides; for if it be pride or culpable immodesty to presume ourselves wiser than any man, what is it then to prefer ourselves in that respect before our teachers; as indeed we do, when without evident reason we disregard, or dissent from their opinion?

Rom. xii. 3, 10. Gal. vi. 3. Phil. ii. 3 1 Cor. viii. 2. 1 Tim. vi. 4.

It is then a duty very reasonable, and a very commendable practice, to rely upon the guidance of our pastors in such cases, wherein surer direction faileth, and we cannot otherwise fully satisfy ourselves.

Neither in doing so (against some appearances of reason, or with some violence to our private conceits) do we act against our conscience, but rather truly according to it; for conscience (as the word in this case is used) is nothing else but an opinion in practical matters, grounded upon the best reason we can discern: if therefore in any case the authority of our guides be a reason outweighing all other reasons apparent, he that in such a case, notwithstanding other arguments less forcible, doth conform his judgment and practice thereto, therein exactly followeth conscience; yea, in doing otherwise, he would thwart and violence his own conscience, and be self-condemned, adhering to a less probable reason in opposition to one more probable.

I do not hereby mean to assert, that we are obliged indifferently (with an implicit faith, or blind obedience) to believe all that our teachers say, or to practise all they bid us: for they are men, and therefore subject to error and sin; they may neglect or abuse the advantages they have of knowing better than others; they may sometimes, by infirmity, by negligence, by pravity, fail in performing faithfully their duty toward us; they may be swayed by temper, be led by passion, be corrupted by ambition or avarice, so as thence to embrace and vent bad doctrines: we do see our pastors often dissenting and

clashing among themselves, sometimes with themselves, so as to change and retract their own opinions [c]. SERM. LIX.

We find the prohets of old complaining of priests, of pastors, of elders and prophets, who *handled the law, yet were ignorant of God;* who *erred in vision, and stumbled in judgment;* who *were profane, brutish, light, and treacherous persons; who polluted the sanctuary, and did violence to the law, and profaned holy things;* who *handled the law, yet knew not God;* from *whom the law and counsel did perish; who taught for hire, and divined for money; who themselves departed out of the way, and caused many to stumble, and corrupted the covenant of Levi; who destroyed and scattered the sheep of God's pasture.* (Jer. ii. 8.) Isa. xxviii. 7. Jer x. 21. xii. 10. Jer. xxiii. 11. (Jer. xviii. 18. v. 31. vi 13.) Zeph iii. 4. Ezek. xxii. 26. Mal. i. 6. Ezek. vii. 26. Mic. iii. 11. Mal. ii. 8, 9. Jer xxiii. 11. xii. 10.

There were in our Saviour's time guides, * *of the ferment of whose doctrine* good people were *bid to beware;* who *transgressed and defeated the commandment of God by their traditions;* who *did take away the key of knowledge, so that they would not enter themselves into the kingdom of heaven, nor would suffer others to enter; blind guides,* who both themselves did fall, and drew others into the ditch of noxious error and wicked practice: the followers of which guides did *in vain worship God, observing for doctrine the precepts of men.* [c] Mat. xvi. 6, 12. Luke xii. 1. Matt. xv. 2, 6. Luke xi. 52. Matt. xv. 14. Matt. xv. 9.

There have not since the primitive times of the Gospel wanted those who (indulging to ambition, avarice, curiosity, faction, and other bad affections) have depraved and debased religion with noxious errors and idle superstitions; such as St. Bernard describeth, &c. Vid. Apol. Eccl. Ang.

We are, in matters of such infinite concernment to our eternal welfare, in wisdom and duty obliged not wholly without farther heed or care to trust the diligence and integrity of others, but to consider and look about us, using our own reason, judgment, and discretion, so far as we are capable; we cannot in such a case be blamed for too much circumspection and caution.

We are not wholly blind, not void of reason, not desti-

[c] Is. iii. 12. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

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tute of fit helps; in many cases we have competent ability to judge, and means sufficient to attain knowledge: we are therefore concerned to use our eyes, to employ our reason, to embrace and improve the advantages vouchsafed us.

We are accountable personally for all our actions, as agreeable or cross to reason; if we are mistaken by our own default, or misled by the ill guidance of others, we shall however deeply suffer for it, and *die in our iniquity;* the ignorance or error of our guides will not wholly excuse us from guilt, or exempt us from punishment; it is fit therefore that we should be allowed, as to the sum of the matter, to judge and choose for ourselves: for if our salvation were wholly placed in the hands of others, so that we could not but in case of their error or default miscarry, our ruin would be inevitable, and consequently not just: we should perish without blame, if we were bound, as a blind and brutish herd, to follow others.

Ezek. iii. 18.

We, in order to our practice, (which must be regulated by faith and knowledge,) and toward preparing ourselves for our grand account, are obliged to get a knowledge and persuasion concerning our duty; *to prove* (or search and examine) *what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God;* for ignorance, if anywise by our endeavour vincible, will not secure us: *He that*, saith our Lord and Judge, *knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes;* (few; not in themselves, but comparatively to those which shall be inflicted on them who transgress against knowledge and conscience.)

Rom. xii. 2. Eph. v. 10.

Luke xii. 48.

We are bound to study truth, to improve our minds in the knowledge and love of it, to be firmly persuaded of it in a rational way; so that we be not easily shaken, or seduced from it.

The Apostles do charge it upon us as our duty and concernment, that we *abound in faith and knowledge;* that we *be rooted and built up in Christ, and stablished in the faith, so as to be stedfast, and unmoveable*, not to *be soon shaken in mind, or troubled*; *to grow up and increase*

2 Cor. viii. 7. Col. ii. 7. 1 Cor. xv. 58. 2 Thess. ii. 2. Col. i. 10. 2 Pet. iii. 18. ii. 2. Eph. iv. 15.

in all divine knowledge; that *the word of God should dwell richly in us in all wisdom;* that we should *be filled with all knowledge, so as to be able to teach and admonish one another;* that *our love should abound more and more in knowledge and all judgment, that we may approve things excellent,* (or scan things different;) that we *be enriched in all the word,* (that is, in all the doctrine of the Gospel,) *and in all knowledge;* that *we be filled in the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;* that we should not be *unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is;* that we should *be perfect and complete in all the will of God,* (that is, first in the knowledge of it, then in compliance with it;) that *in understanding we should not be children, but perfect men.*

Col. iii. 16. Rom. xv. 14. Heb. v. 12. Phil. i. 9, 10. 1 Cor. i. 5. Col. i. 9. Eph. v. 17. Col. iv. 12. 1 Cor. xiv. 20 Heb. v. 12.

We are likewise by them commanded to *take heed of false prophets;* to *try the spirits whether they are of God;* to *see that no man deceive us;* to *look that no man spoil us by vain deceit;* to *try all things, and hold fast that which is good;* which precepts imply, that we should be furnished with a good faculty of judgment, and competent knowledge in the principal matters of Christian doctrine, concerning both the mysteries of faith and rules of practice. Our Lord himself and his Apostles did not upon other terms than of rational consideration and discussion, exact credit and obedience to their words; they did not insist barely upon their own authority, but exhorted their disciples to examine strictly, and judge faithfully concerning the truth and reasonableness of their doctrine: *Search the Scriptures,* for *they testify of me; If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works:* so our Lord appealed to their reason, proceeding upon grounds of Scripture and common sense: and, *I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say;* so St. Paul addressed his discourse to his disciples; otherwise we should be incapable to observe them.

Matt. vii. 15. 1 John iv. 1. Matt. xxiv. 4. Eph. v. 6. Col. ii. 8, 18. 1 Thess. v. 21. John v. 39. John x. 37, 38. xv 22, 24. xii. 48. 1 Cor. x. 15.

We are also bound to defer the principal regard to God's wisdom and will, so as, without reservation or exception, to embrace whatever he doth say, to obey what he positively doth command, whatever authority doth

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contradict his word, or cross his command: in such cases we may remonstrate with the Apostles, *If it be just before God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye;* and, *We ought to obey God rather than men:* we may denounce with St. Paul; *If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel, let him be accursed.*

Acts iv. 19.
Acts v. 29.
Gal. i. 8.

We are obliged always to act *with faith*, (that is, with a persuasion concerning the lawfulness of what we do;) for, *whatever is not of faith, is sin:* we should never condemn ourselves in what we try or embrace.

Rom. xiv. 23.
Rom. xiv. 23.

These things considered, we may, and it much behoveth us, reserving due respect to our guides, with humility and modesty to weigh and scan their dictates and their orders; lest by them unawares we be drawn into error or sin; like the ingenuous Bereans, who did ἀνακρίνειν τὰς γραφὰς *search and examine the Scriptures, if those things were so.* Our guides are but the *helpers*, they are not lords of our faith; the Apostles themselves were not.

Acts xvii. 11.
2 Cor. i. 24.

We may, and are bound, if they tell us things evidently repugnant to God's word, or to sound reason and common sense, to dissent from them; if they impose on us things evidently contrary to God's law, to forbear compliance with them; we may in such cases appeal *ad legem et testimonium;* we must not admit a *non obstante* to God's law.

Is. viii. 20.
Plebs timens Dominum separare se debet a peccatore præposito. *Cypr.*

If other arguments, weighed in the balance of honest and impartial reason, with cautious and industrious consideration, do overpoise the authority of our guides; let us in God's name adhere to them, and follow our own judgments; it would be a violation of our conscience, a prevarication toward our own souls, and a rebellion against God to do otherwise: when against our own mind, so carefully informed, we follow the dictates of others, we like fools rashly adventure and prostitute our souls.

This proceeding is nowise inconsistent with what we delivered before; for this due wariness in examining, this reservation in assenting, this exception in practice, in some cases, wherein the matter hath evidence, and we a faculty to judge, doth nowise hinder but that we should defer

much regard to the judgment of our guides; that we should in those cases, wherein no light discovereth itself outshining their authority, rely upon it; that where our eyes will not serve clearly to direct us, we should use theirs; where our reason faileth to satisfy us, we should acquiesce in theirs; that we should regard their judgments so far, that no petty scruple emerging, no faint semblance of reason should prevail upon us to dissent from their doctrine, to reject their advice, to disobey their injunctions.

In fine, let us remember, that the mouth of truth, which bid us to *beware of the* bad *doctrine* of those who *sat in Moses's chair*, did also charge us *to observe all they taught and enjoined;* that is, all not certainly repugnant to the divine law. In effect, if we discost from the advices of our sober teachers, appointed for us by God, we shall in the end have occasion to bewail with him in the Proverbs: *How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!* Matt. xv. 14. xxiii. 3. Prov. v. 12, 13.

To these things I shall only add one rule, which we may well suppose comprised in the precept we treat upon; which is, that at least we forbear openly to dissent from our guides, or to contradict their doctrine; except only, if it be not so false (which never or rarely can happen among us) as to subvert the foundations of faith, or practice of holiness. If we cannot be internally convinced by their discourses, if their authority cannot sway with us against the prevalence of other reasons, yet may we spare outwardly to oppose them, or to slight their judgment; for doing thus doth tend, as to the disgrace of their persons, so to the disparagement of their office, to an obstructing the efficacy of their ministry, to the infringement of order and peace in the Church: for when the inconsiderate people shall see their teachers distrusted and disrespected; when they perceive their doctrine may be challenged and opposed by plausible discourses; then will they hardly trust them, or comply with them in matters most certain and necessary;

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than which disposition in the people there cannot happen any thing more prejudicial or baneful to the Church.

But let thus much serve for the obedience due to the doctrine of our guides; let us consider that which we owe to them in reference to their conversation and practice.

The following their practice may well be referred to this precept; for that their practice is a kind of living doctrine, a visible law, or rule of action; and because indeed the notion of a guide primarily doth imply example; that he which is guided should respect the guide as a precedent, being concerned to walk after his footsteps.

Most of the reasons, which urge deference to their judgment in teaching, do in proportion infer obligation to follow their example; (which indeed is the most easy and clear way of instruction to vulgar capacity; carrying with it also most efficacious encouragement and excitement to practice;) they are obliged, and it is expected from them, to live with especial regularity, circumspection, and strictness of conversation; they are by God's grace especially disposed and enabled to do so; and many common advantages they have of doing so; (a more perfect knowledge of things, firmness of principles, and clearness of notions; a deeper tincture, and more savoury relish of truth, attained by continued meditation thereon; consequently a purity of mind and affection, a retirement from the world and its temptation, freedom from distraction of worldly care and the encumbrances of business, with the like.)

They are often charged to be exemplary in conversation, as we before shewed, and that involveth a correspondent obligation to follow them. They must, like St. John Baptist, *be burning and shining lights; stars in God's right hand; lights of the world; whose light should shine before men, that men may see their good works;* and by their light direct their steps.

John v. 23. Rev. xvi. 20 Matt. v. 14, 16.

They are proposed as copies, which signifies that we must in our practice transcribe them.

We are often directly commanded to imitate them; ὧν

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μιμεῖσθε τὴν πίστιν, *whose faith imitate ye*, (that is, their faithful perseverance in the doctrine and practice of Christianity,) saith the Apostle in this chapter.

Their conversation is safely imitable in all cases wherein no better rule appeareth, and when it doth not appear discordant from God's law and the dictates of sound reason; for supposing that discordance, we cease to be obliged to follow them; as when our Lord prescribeth in respect to the Pharisees; *Whatever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their works; for they say and do not.* Matt. xxiii. 3.

It is indeed easier for them to speak well than to do well; their doctrine therefore is more commonly a sure guide than their practice; yet when there wanteth a clearer guidance of doctrine, their practice may pass for instructive, and a probable argument or warrant of action.

SERMON LX.

OF SELF-LOVE IN GENERAL.

2 Tim. iii. 2.

For men shall be lovers of themselves.

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St. Paul in this place, out of a prophetical spirit instructing or warning his disciple Timothy, concerning *difficult times*, or the calamitous state of things, which should ensue, induced upon the world, as it useth to happen, by a general prevalency of vicious dispositions and practices among men, doth thence take occasion, by a specification of their vices, to characterize the persons who should concur to produce that hard state.

Καιροὶ χαλεποὶ ἐνστήσονται.

Among those vices he placeth self-love in the van, as the capital and leading vice; intimating thereby, that it is of all in its nature most heinous, or in its influence most noxious [a].

This indeed is of all vices the most common, so deeply radicated in our nature, and so generally overspreading the world, that no man thoroughly is exempted from it, most men are greatly tainted with it, some are wholly possessed and acted by it: this is the root from which all other vices do grow, and without which hardly any sin could subsist; the chief vices especially have an obvious and evident dependence thereon.

All impiety doth involve a loving ourselves in undue

[a] Hæc omnia mala ab eo velut fonte manantia, quod primum posuit, seipsos amantes. *August. in Joh. Tract.* 123.

manner and measure; so that we set ourselves in our esteem and affection before God; we prefer our own conceits to his judgment and advice; we raise our pleasure above his will and authority; we bandy forces with him, and are like the profane Belshazzar, of whom it is said, *Thou hast lifted up thyself against* (or above) *the Lord of heaven.* SERM. LX. Dan. v. 23.

From hence particularly, by a manifest extraction, are derived those chief and common vices, pride, ambition, envy, avarice, intemperance, injustice, uncharitableness, peevishness, stubborness, discontent, and impatience. For,

We overvalue ourselves, our qualities and endowments, our powers and abilities, our fortunes and external advantages; hence are we so proud, that is, so lofty in our conceits, and fastuous in our demeanour.

We would be the only men, or most considerable in the world; hence are we ambitious, hence continually with unsatiable greediness we do affect and strive to procure increase of reputation, of power, of dignity.

We would engross to ourselves all sorts of good things in highest degree; hence enviously we become jealous of the worth and virtue, we grudge and repine at the prosperity of others; as if they defalked somewhat from our excellency, or did eclipse the brightness of our fortune.

We desire to be not only full in our enjoyment, but free and absolute in our dominion of things; not only secure from needing the succour of other men, but independent in regard to God's providence; hence are we so covetous of wealth, hence we so eagerly scrape it, and so carefully hoard it up.

We can refuse our dear selves no satisfaction, although unreasonable or hurtful; therefore we so readily gratify sensual appetites in unlawful or excessive enjoyments of pleasure.

Being blinded or transported with fond dotage on ourselves, we cannot discern or will not regard what is due to others; hence are we apt upon occasion to do them wrong.

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Love to ourselves doth in such manner suck in and swallow our spirits, doth so pinch in and contract our hearts, doth according to its computation so confine and abridge our interests, that we cannot in our affection or in real expression of kindness tend outwards; that we can afford little good-will, or impart little good to others.

Deeming ourselves extremely wise and worthy of regard, we cannot endure to be contradicted in our opinion, or crossed in our humour; hence upon any such occasion our choler riseth, and easily we break forth into violent heats of passion.

From the like causes it is, that we cannot willingly stoop to due obeisance of our superiors, in reverence to their persons, and observance of their laws; that we cannot contentedly acquiesce in the station or portion assigned us by Providence; that we cannot patiently support our condition, or accept the events befalling us.

In fine, if surveying all the several kinds of naughty dispositions in our souls, and of miscarriages in our lives, we do scan their particular nature, and search into their original causes; we shall find inordinate self-love to be a main ingredient and a common source of them all: so that a divine of great name had some reason to affirm, that original sin (or that innate distemper from which men generally become so very prone to evil and averse to good) doth consist in self-love, disposing us to all kinds of irregularity and excess [b]: St. Paul therefore might well set this in the front of all those sins, which depraved the age he spake of; they having all such a dependence on it.

It is therefore very requisite that we should well understand this fault, that we may be the better able to curb and correct it; to which purpose I shall endeavour, by God's help, somewhat to declare its nature.

[b] Est ergo ista ad peccandum amore sui propensio, peccatum originale, &c. *Zuingl. apud Bell de Amiss. grat.* iv. 2.

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The word *self-love* is ambiguous; for all self-love is not culpable; there is a necessary and unavoidable, there is an innocent and allowable, there is a worthy and commendable self-love.

There is a self-love originally implanted by God himself in our nature, in order to the preservation and enjoyment of our being; the which is common to us with all creatures, and cannot anywise be extirpated; for *no man*, as St. Paul saith, *ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it;* every man living, by a natural and necessary instinct, is prompted to guard his life, shunning all dangers threatening its destruction; to purvey for the support and convenience of it; to satisfy those natural appetites, which importunately crave relief, and without intolerable pain cannot be denied it; to repel or decline whatever is very grievous and offensive to nature[c]; the self-love that urgeth us to do these things is no more to be blamed than it can be shunned. Eph. v. 29.

Reason farther alloweth such a self-love, which moveth us to the pursuance of any thing apparently good, pleasant, or useful to us, the which doth not contain in it any essential turpitude or iniquity; doth not obstruct the attainment of some true or greater good; doth not produce some overbalancing mischief; doth not infer harm to the world, or wrong to other men[d].

Reason dictateth and prescribeth to us, that we should have a sober regard to our true good and welfare; to our best interest and solid content; to that, which (all things being rightly stated, considered, and computed) will in the final event prove most beneficial and satisfactory to us: a self-love working in prosecution of such things common sense cannot but allow and approve[e].

[a] Panis ematur, olus, vini sextarius; adde
Queis humana sibi doleat natura negatis. [*Hor. Serm.* i. 1.

[d] Τὸν μὲν ἀγαθὸν δεῖ φίλαυτον εἶναι· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ὀνήσεται τὰ καλὰ πράττων, ἐ τοὺς ἄλλους ὠφελήσει· τὸν δὲ μοχθηρὸν ᾗ δεῖ, βλάψει γὰρ καὶ ἑαυτὸν καὶ τοὺς πέλας, φαύλοις πάθεσιν ἑπόμενος. *Arist. Eth.* ix. 8.

[e] Πᾶς γὰρ νοῦς αἱρεῖται τὸ βέλτιστον ἑαυτῷ, ὁ δὲ ἐπιεικὴς πείθαρχεῖ τῷ νῷ. *Ibid.*

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God himself hath to these suggestions of nature, and dictates of reason, adjoined his own suffrage, having in various ways declared it to be his will and pleasure, that we should tender our real and final good. He, as the author of nature, and fountain of reason, may be supposed to ordain that, unto which nature doth so potently incline, and which reason so clearly prescribeth. He plainly hath to every man committed himself in charge, so as to preserve his being from ruin, and to enjoy it with comfort. He, by making so rich a provision for the sustenance of our lives, and satisfaction of our appetites, by framing our bodies to relish delight, and suiting so many accommodations in wondrous correspondence to our senses, hath sufficiently intimated it to be his pleasure, that we should in reasonable measure seek them and enjoy them; otherwise his care would have been vain, and his work useless; yea, he might seem to have laid an ill design to tempt and ensnare us; he certainly had no such intent; but as he made us out of goodness, as he made us capable of tasting comfort, as he hath furnished us with means of attaining it, so he meaneth that we should partake thereof.

'Quia tutelacerrissima ex proximo esse sibi quisque consensus est. *Sen. Ep.* 121.

He also expressly hath commanded us to love all men, not excluding ourselves from the number; to love our neighbour, and therefore ourselves; who of all are nearest to ourselves; who occur as the first objects of humanity and charity; whose needs we most sensibly feel; whose good is in itself no less considerable than the single good of any other person; who must first look to our own good before we can be capable to love others, or do any good to our neighbour.

He therefore hath made the love of ourselves to be the rule and standard, the pattern, the argument of our love to others; imposing on us those great commands of *loving our neighbours as ourselves*, and *doing as we would be done unto*; which imply not only a necessity, but an obligation of loving ourselves.

He doth enforce obedience to all his commands, by

promising rewards, yielding immense profit and transcendent pleasure to us, and by threatening punishments grievous to our sense; which proceeding is grounded upon a supposition that we do and ought greatly to love ourselves, or to regard our own interest and pleasure. SERM. LX. Matt. xvi. 26.

He doth recommend wisdom or virtue to us, as most agreeable to self-love; most eligible, because it yieldeth great benefit to ourselves; because, as the Wise Man saith, *he that getteth it doth love his own soul; he that keepeth it, shall find good.* Prov. xix. 8, 16. xi. 17.

Aristotle saith of a virtuous man, that he is the greatest *self-lover;* Δόξειε δ' ἂν ὁ τοιοῦτος εἶναι μᾶλλον φίλαυτος· ἀπονέμει γὰρ ἑαυτῷ τὰ κάλλιστα, καὶ μάλιστα ἀγαθὰ, καὶ χαρίζεται ἑαυτῷ τῷ κυριωτάτῳ. Eth. ix. 8.

He dissuadeth from vice, as therefore detestable, because the embracing it doth imply hatred of ourselves, bringing mischief and damage to us; because, as the Wise Man doth express it, *he that sinneth, wrongeth his own soul; he that despiseth instruction, despiseth his own soul; he that committeth injury, hateth his own soul.* Prov. viii. 36. xv. 32. xxix. 24.

He commendeth his laws to our observance, by declaring them in their design and tendency chiefly to regard our good and advantage; made apt to preserve the safety and quiet, to promote the wealth and prosperity of our lives; to bring ease and comfort to our minds, grace and ornament to our names, salvation and happiness to our souls. Deut. x. 12. Mic. vi. 8. Neh. ix. 13. Prov. iii. iv. &c.

In fine, God chargeth and encourageth us to affect and pursue the highest goods whereof we are capable; most ample riches, most sublime honours, most sweet pleasures, most complete felicity; *He*, saith St. Paul, *will render to them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life*; to seek such things is the highest instance, is the surest argument of self-love that can be; he therefore who obligeth, who encourageth us thereto, doth plainly shew his approbation of a self-love. Rom. ii. 7.

So it appeareth that all self-love is not culpable, but that some kind thereof is very commendable; how then

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shall we distinguish; how shall we *sever*, to use the Prophet's language, *the precious from the vile?*

Jer. xv. 19.

To this we may answer in general, that all love of ourselves which is unreasonably grounded, or which is excessive in its degrees and limits; or which venteth itself in wrong instances; or which driveth our mind, will, and affections toward bad objects; or which produceth effects noxious to ourselves or others, is culpable. If we esteem ourselves for things not true, or really for things indifferent or mean, for things nowise excellent or valuable; if we affect ourselves beyond compass, so as to postpone the love of God, or exclude the love of our neighbour; if out of regard to ourselves we do things base or mischievous; if thence we dote upon vain profits, embrace foul pleasures, incur sinful guilt, expose ourselves to grievous danger, trouble, remorse, and punishment; if thereby we are engaged to forsake our true interest, and forfeit our final happiness; then assuredly it is a foolish and vicious self-love; it is indeed not a proper, but a false and equivocal love, usurping that goodly name; it is a real hatred, or enmity, disguised under the semblance of friendship; it more properly may be called cruelty, treachery, flattery, mockery, delusion, and abuse of ourselves.

But for a more distinct and clear resolution of the case, we may do well to consider the proper acts of love, which do constitute it, or inseparably do adhere thereto; such as those: a good esteem of the person, which is the object of our love; an earnest good-will toward him, or desire of his good; a complacence in good, and dissatisfaction in evil arriving to him; a readiness to yield or procure good to him; a desire of union and enjoyment, that is, of intimate conversation and intercourse with him, a deference of regard to him, a compliance with his desires, and care to please him. Now if these acts toward ourselves are in their kind, in their grounds, in their measures conformable to reason, piety, and justice, then is our self-love innocent or worthy; if they are not so, it is criminal and vicious.

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If we do rightly esteem ourselves, (both absolutely, and in comparison to others;) if we desire to ourselves what is fit and just; if we are pleased with true goods, and displeased at real evils incident to us; if we do in lawful ways endeavour to procure things truly convenient and beneficial to us; if we maintain a faithful and cheerful correspondence with ourselves; if we have a sober regard to ourselves, agreeable to our nature and state; if we comply with the dictates of our reason, and satisfy our desires conforming thereto; then do we love ourselves innocently, then are we true friends to ourselves.

But if we overvalue ourselves; if we do wish to ourselves things incommodious or hurtful; if we are delighted or dissatisfied in false shews of good or evil befalling us; if we strive to acquire for ourselves things bad or mischievous; if our converse with ourselves is naughty or vain; if we make indecent applications to ourselves; if we stoop to our fond humours, or sooth our unreasonable desires; then is our self-love spurious, then are we indeed enemies to ourselves.

Farther, toward an exact discussion and trial of this case, we should do well, divesting ourselves of selfishness, to consider ourselves as other persons, or abstractedly as mere objects of those acts which love doth imply; for what rectitude or what obliquity there would be in them in regard to any object, the same would be in reference to ourselves. For instance,

If we should value any person justly according to his real worth, allowing a just rate to his virtue, to his parts, to his endowments, to his advantages of nature or fortune; not ascribing to him things which belong not to him, nor overprizing those he hath, not preferring him in any respect before those which are his superiors or equals therein; we shall herein do wisely and justly: but if (having our judgment anywise perverted) we do admire a person beyond his worth, and advance him above his rank; if we overlook his apparent defects and blemishes, or take them for excellencies, and yield them applause; what is this but folly and dotage, tempered with iniquity? and if

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it be such in regard to another, it is no less such in respect to ourselves.

If to any person we should wish things suitable, commodious, and advantageous, by obtaining which he, without any wrong or prejudice to others, might be considerably benefited, we shall herein act humanely, and like good friends; but if we desire things to him, which do not become or befit him, which will do him mischief, or which he cannot have without injury and damage to others, are we not herein notoriously unkind or unjust? The case is the same transferred to ourselves.

If we should observe any man by occurrences happening to him well improved in his condition, thriving in an honest way, prosperous in good undertakings, growing in worthy accomplishments of soul, to find satisfaction therein would be greatly laudable; and so it would be to condole, if we should see any man to fall into any grievous disaster or calamity; but should we behold a man (although in false appearance bettered, yet really) prejudiced and endamaged, (as when one is enriched by cozenage or rapine, is advanced by flattery or sycophantry, is famed for base or vain exploits, is immersed into care and trouble, is exposed to danger and temptation, is fallen into the enchantments of pleasure,) are we not, if we take pleasure therein, very silly, or very cruel? and if we should observe good physic administered to a sick neighbour, or that he is engaged in painful exercise for his health, should it not be absurd for us to be sorry thereat? For the same reasons we are blameable if we do rejoice when that we prosper in bad courses, or enjoy sinful pleasures, or fall into dangerous temptations; if we distaste the wholesome physic of adversity dispensed by Providence, or dislike the needful exercises of duty by God prescribed to us.

If we do yield our advice and aid to our neighbour, in furtherance of any design which is honest and beneficial to him, we then unquestionably do well; but if we do abet or encourage him in unjust or mischievous enterprises; if we render ourselves panders to his unlawful desires, factors for his unjust profits, complices of his

wicked practices, advocates of his sins; is this true love, is this faithful friendship? No surely; nor is it such toward ourselves, when we employ our faculties in contrivance or achievement of any unlawful designs, however satisfactory to our desires.

If we should indifferently (without regard to the laws of piety, justice, humanity, or decency) espouse the interests of any person, so that for the promoting his designs, advancing his profit, gratifying his humour or pleasure, we should violate the commands of God, we should neglect the public good, we should work injury or mischief to our neighbour; would this dealing be allowable? Neither would it be so, if for our own sake, in regard to our private interest, we should thus behave ourselves.

2. If we do affect to hold free, sincere, cheerful, kind conversation with any person, for mutual instruction and comfort, this is sociable and friendly; but if we maintain frothy, foul, malicious, anywise pestilent discourse, apt to corrupt, or to annoy him, this is loathsome: and so it is, if we keep such intercourse with ourselves, harbouring vain, impure, unjust, uncharitable thoughts in our minds.

If we should defer regard to any man, answerable to his worth, we should thereby practise according to the good rules of humanity: but should we so affect or fancy any man that we should care for no man else, should pay no due respect, or perform any office of kindness otherwhere; should take no man's word, or mind any man's opinion beside, nor care to converse with any other; would this be love, would it not be ridiculous fondness? It is no less, if in regard to ourselves we are so morose, surly, or neglectful.

If we should comply with any man's reasonable desire, this were fair and courteous; if we should confide in the probable assistance of any person, this were modest prudence: but if we should entirely conform our practice to the will or humour of another, against the dictates of our own reason, and to the harm of ourselves or others; would this be love, would it not rather be vile and pitiful slavery? If we should without any ground, yea against

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plain reason, rely upon the help or direction of another, would this be love, would it not rather be wild presumption? The same therefore it must be in us, if we in like manner are devoted to our own will, or confident in our own ability.

If we should commend any man for good qualities or good deeds, this is honest; if we should encourage him in good undertakings, this is charitable: but to applaud his defects, to bolster him in ill practice, this is flattery and treachery; and in so doing toward others, we are not friends to ourselves, but traitors and parasites.

By such reflections and comparisons we may, I think, competently understand the nature of that bastard self-love, which is so vicious in itself, and productive of so many vices; but more fully to display, and withal to dissuade us from this vice, I shall particularly insist upon the common sorts thereof, shewing the peculiar unreasonableness of each, and the mischiefs consequent from it. They are indeed usually combined and complicated in practice, and have much affinity both in their nature and fruit; but I shall, as well as I can, abstract them one from the other, and so treat on them distinctly; they are these: *Self-Conceit*, *Self-Confidence*, *Self-Complacence*, *Self-Will*, *Self-Interest*. These I shall handle in the following discourses.

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OF SELF-CONCEIT.

2 Tim. iii. 2.

For men shall be lovers of themselves, &c.

I. The first and most radical kind of vicious self-love is *self-conceitedness*; that which St. Paul calleth τὸ ὑπερφρονεῖν, to overween, or *to think highly of one's self, beyond what he ought to think*. This doth consist in several acts or instances.

Sometimes we in our imagination assume to ourselves perfections not belonging to us, in kind or in degree; we take ourselves to be other men than we are; to be wise, to be good, to be happy, when we are not so; at least to be far wiser, better, and happier than we are. The pleasure naturally springing from a good opinion of ourselves doth often so blind our eyes and pervert our judgment, that we see in us what is not there, or see it magnified and transformed into another shape than its own; any appearance doth suffice to produce such mistakes, and having once entertained them, we are unwilling to depose them; we cannot endure by severe reflection on ourselves to correct such pleasant errors; hence commonly we presume ourselves to be very considerable, very excellent, very extraordinary persons, when in truth we are very mean and worthless: so did St. Paul suppose when he said, *If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself*; such was the case of that

Gal. vi. 3.

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church in the Apocalypse; *Thou sayest I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not, that thou art wretched and miserable;* they were like men in a dream, or in a frenzy, who take themselves for great and wealthy persons, when indeed they are in a sorry and beggarly condition: into the like extravagancies of mistake we are all likely to fall, if we do not very carefully and impartially examine and study ourselves.

Rev. iii. 17.

Again: Sometimes we make vain judgments upon the things we do possess, prizing them much beyond their true worth and merit; consequently overvaluing ourselves for them; the most trivial and pitiful things (things which in themselves have no worth, but are mere tools, and commonly serve bad purposes; things which do not render our souls anywise better, which do not breed any real content, which do not conduce to our welfare and happiness) we value at a monstrous rate, as if they were the most excellent and admirable things in the world. Have we wit? how witless are we in prizing it, or ourselves for it; although we employ it to no good end, not serving God, not benefiting men, not furthering our own good, or anywise bettering our condition with it; although we no otherwise use it, than vainly to please ourselves or others, that is, to act the part of fools or buffoons. Have we learning or knowledge? then are we rare persons; not considering that many a bad, many a wretched person, hath had much more than we, who hath used it to the abuse of others, to the torment of himself; that hell may be full of learned scribes and subtile disputers, of eloquent orators and profound philosophers; who *when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened;* not considering also how very defective our knowledge is, how mixed with error and darkness; how useless and vain, yea how pernicious it is, if not sanctified by God's grace, and managed to his service. Have we riches? then are we brave men, as fine and glorious in our conceit as in our outward attire; although the veriest

Rom. i. 21.

Ardua res hæc est, opibus non tradere mores. *Mart.* xi. 6.

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fools, the basest and most miserable of men, that go on the ground do exceed us therein; although, as Aristotle saith, *Most either not use it, or abuse it*[a]; although our wealth affordeth us no real benefit or comfort, but exposeth us to numberless snares, temptations, and mischiefs; although it hath no stability, but easily may be taken from us. Have we reputation? How doth that make us highly to repute ourselves in a slavish imitation of others! yet nothing is less substantial, nothing is less felt, nothing is so easily lost, nothing is more brittle and slippery than it; a bubble is not sooner broken, or a wave sunk than is the opinion of men altered concerning us. Have we power? what doth more raise our minds! yet what is that commonly but a dangerous instrument of mischief to others, and of ruin to ourselves; at least an engagement to care and trouble? What but that did render Caligula, Nero, and Domitian so hurtful to others, so unhappy themselves? what but that hath filled the world with disasters, and turned all history into tragedy? Have we prosperous success in our affairs? then we boast and triumph in our hearts; not remembering what the Wise Man saith, *The prosperity of fools destroyeth them;* Prov. i. 32. and that experience sheweth, prosperity doth usually either find or make us fools[b]; that the wisest men (as Solomon) 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. the best men (as Hezekiah,) have been befooled by it; thus are we apt to overvalue our things, and ourselves for them.

There is no way indeed wherein we do not thus impose upon ourselves, either assuming false, or misrating true advantages; the general ill consequences of which misdemeanour are, that our minds are stuffed with dreams and fantastic imaginations, instead of wise and sober thoughts; that we misbehave ourselves towards ourselves, treating ourselves like other men than we are, with unseemly regard; that we expect other men should have

[a] Τῶν πολλῶν οἱ μὲν ἀ χρῶνται τῷ πλούτῳ διὰ μικρολογίαν, οἱ δὲ παραχρῶνται δι ἀσωτίαν. *Arist. apud. Plut. in Pelop.*

[b] Rarus enim ferme sensus communis in illa Fortuna——— *Juv. Sat.* 8.

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like opinions, and yield answerable deferences to us; and are, if we find it otherwise, grievously offended; that we are apt to despise or disregard others, demeaning ourselves insolently and fastuously toward them; that we are apt to seek and undertake things, which we cannot attain or achieve; that we neglect the succours needful to help or comfort us, and the like; which will appear more plainly by considering the several objects or matters in which self-conceit is exercised; they are especially three: *intellectual endowments; moral qualities; advantages of body, fortune,* and *outward state.*

1 Cor. iii. 18. Μωρὸς γενέσθω, ἵνα γένηται σοφός. *Vid. Chrys. in Phil. Or.* 7.

1. We are apt to conceit highly of ourselves upon presumption of our *intellectual endowments* or capacities, whether *natural* (as *wit, fancy, memory, judgment,*) or *acquired,* (as *learning, skill, experience,*) especially of that which is called *wisdom,* which in a manner comprehendeth the rest, and manageth them; whereby we rightly discern what is true, and what is fit to be done in any case proposed: this we are prone in great measure to arrogate, and much to pride ourselves therein. The world is full as it can hold of wise men, or of those who take themselves to be such; not only absolutely, but comparatively, in derogation and preference to all others: May

Job xii. 2. it not be said to us as Job did to his friends, *No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you?* Do we not fancy ourselves incomparably wise, so that all our imaginations are deep and subtile, all our resolutions sound and safe, all our opinions irrefragably certain, all our sayings like so many oracles, or indubitable maxims? Do we not expect that every man's judgment should stoop to ours? do we not wonder that any man should presume to dissent from us? must any man's voice be heard when

Ὅσος πίπνυται· τοὶ δὲ σκιαὶ ἀίσσουσι.

we speak? Do we not suppose that our authority doth add huge weight to our words? that it is unquestionably true because we say it? that it is presumption, it is temerity, it is rudeness hardly pardonable to contest our distates? This is a common practice, and that which is

Prov. iii. 7. Rom. xii. 16. often prohibited and blamed in Scripture; *Be not wise in thine own eyes,* saith the Wise Man; and, *Be not wise in*

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your own conceits, saith the Apostle; and, *I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.* Rom. xii. 3.

The great reasonableness of which precepts will appear by considering both the absurdity and the inconveniences of the practice which they forbid.

If we do reflect either upon the common nature of men, or upon our own constitution, we cannot but find our conceits of our wisdom very absurd; for how can we take ourselves for wise, if we observe the great blindness of our mind, and feebleness of human reason, by many palpable arguments discovering itself? if we mark how painful the search, and how difficult the comprehension is of any truth; how hardly the most sagacious can descry any thing, how easily the most judicious mistake; how the most learned everlastingly dispute, and the wisest irreconcileably clash about matters seeming most familiar and facile; how often the most wary and steady do shift their opinions; how the wiser a man is, and the more experience he gaineth, the less confident he is in his own judgment, and the more sensible he groweth of his weakness; how dim the sight is of the most perspicacious, and how shallow the conceptions of the most profound; how narrow is the horizon of our knowledge, and how immensely the region of our ignorance is distended; how imperfectly and uncertainly we know those few things, to which our knowledge reacheth[c]; how answerably to such experience we are told in sacred writ, that *every man is brutish in his knowledge*; that *the Lord knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity*: that *vain man would be wise, though he be born like an ass's colt*, (that is, he is naturally wild and stupid;) that *wisdom is hid from the eyes of all men, and is not found in the land of the living*; that *the thoughts*

Jer. x. 14. Psal. xciv. 11. 1 Cor. iii. 20. Job xi. 12. Job xxviii. 21, 12. Wisd. ix. 14.

[c] Quamcunque partem rerum humanarum divinarumque comprehenderis, ingenti copia quærendarum ac discendarum fatigaberis. *Sen. Ep.* 88.

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of mortal men are miserable, and our devices uncertain: if we, I say, do consider such things, how can we but find it strange, that any man should admire his own wisdom, seeing that he thereby doth exempt himself from the common adjunct of his nature, and forgetteth himself to be a man?

If also a man particularly reflecteth on himself, the same practice must needs appear very foolish; for that every man thence may discover in himself peculiar impediments of wisdom; every man in his complexion and in his condition may find things apt to pervert his judgment, and obstruct his acquisition of true knowledge. Is his temper sanguine? thence becometh he quick, rash, credulous, confident and peremptory, slippery and fickle: is it phlegmatic? thence is he slow and heavy; diffident, pertinacious, and stiff in his conceits: his mind is either soft and limber, so as easily to receive the impressions of falsehood speciously represented; or hard and tough, so that he cannot readily admit instruction in truth, or correction of error. His wealth distracteth, or his poverty disturbeth his thoughts; prosperity swelleth his mind up into vain presumptions and satisfactions, or adversity sinketh it down into unreasonable despondencies and dislikes of things; plenty breedeth sloth, want createth trouble, indisposing him to think well; ease doth rust his parts, and business weareth them out; inclination, interest, company, prejudice, do forcibly sway his apprehensions; so that no man can get himself into, or keep himself steady in a perfect balance, requisite for exact judgment of things; no man, therefore, can obtain a degree of wisdom, whereof he may with any reason be conceited; the wisest men surely upon such experience have been little satisfied with their share: *Surely*, saith one, *I am more brutish than any man, and I have not the understanding of a man;* and, *So foolish*, said another, *was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee:* this conceitedness, therefore, is very absurd, and an argument of notable ignorance and folly; neither is there, perhaps, any more plain instance or demonstration of general folly reigning among men than

Prov. iii. 2.

Psal. lxxiii. 22.

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this, that commonly we are so blind and stupid as not to discern and resent our own folly: *If any man*, saith St. Paul, *thinketh that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth not any thing yet as he ought to know;* that is, if any man conceiteth himself to be considerably wise or intelligent, it is a plain sign that he is very ignorant, and understandeth little to any purpose. 1 Cor. viii. 2.

So it is, if we consider ourselves singly; and it is more so, in comparison to others; for what ground can a man have of arrogating to himself a peculiarity of wisdom or judgment? to deem himself extraordinary in that, to which there are no other than ordinary means of arriving? to fancy himself wiser than any other, whenas (secluding accidental differences, that cannot be accounted for) all men have the same parts and faculties of soul, the same means and opportunities of improvement, the same right and liberty of judging about things? Did not he, who *formeth the spirit of man within him*, put into every man that heavenly mark, whereby we discern and judge of things? is not every man concerned in that saying of Elihu, *There is a spirit in men, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding?* do not the fountains of knowledge (natural delight, divine revelation, human instruction, continual experience) stand open to all; and are no less common to men, than is the air they breathe, and the sun which equally shineth on them all? Is God, the donor of wisdom, partial in the distribution of it? doth not that overture reach indifferently to all, *If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally,—and it shall be given him?* may not others be as inquisitive, as industrious, as sincere as we in the search of truth? why not then as successful in finding it? Is there any private chink, through which light shineth only upon us, or truth may be espied? is there any cunning by-path, in which we alone, with more expedition and security than others in the common roads, can travel on toward knowledge? What patents have we to shew for a monopoly of reason? what right have we to engross any knowledge? who hath granted us a privilege of sure

Zech. xii. 1.

Ἐν βροτοῖς. LXX. Job xxxii. 8.

Jam. i. 5.

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judgment, or an exemption from error? how can we in trial of things claim more than a single vote? or why should our word have more weight than any other? may not any man with as much reason prefer his judgment before ours, as we before his? and if we blame him for it, do we not thereby condemn ourselves for doing the like? if we do know but the same things, or frame the same judgments with others, how can we be conceited of that which is promiscuous? if we pretend to abstruse notions, or hold forth paradoxes, how can that be ground of boasting, seeing the cause standeth contested by authority no less than our own, and that it is vain to triumph over the opinions of others before we have conquered them? why in such cases is it not reasonable to presume that among the many dissenters from us, there are some who have as much sense as we, and who have weighed the matter with no less care, no less indifferency? In fine, may not any man with good cause propound to us that expostulation in Job: *Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself? What knowest thou, that we know not? what understandest thou, which is not in us?*

Job. xv. 8, 9.

Such conceitedness therefore is very absurd; and it is no less hurtful; for many great inconveniences, many sad mischiefs spring from it, such as gave the Prophet cause to denounce, *Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own conceit;* it hath many ways bad influence on our souls, and on our lives; it is often our case, which was the case of Babylon, when the Prophet said of it, *Thy wisdom and thy knowledge hath perverted thee; for thou hast said in thy heart, I am, and none else beside me.*

Is. v. 21.

Is. xlvii. 10

Hæc est hominis vera sapientia, imperfectum esse se nosse. *Hier. contra Pelag.* i. 5.

It is a great bar to the getting wisdom, to the receiving instruction and right information about things; for he that taketh himself to be abundantly knowing, or incomparably wise, will not care to learn, will scorn to be taught; he thence becometh more incapable of wisdom than a mere idiot; so did Solomon observe, *Seest thou,* said he, *a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope*

Prov. xx. 12.

of a fool than of him; of a fool that is sensible of his ignorance, there may be hope, that he may by instruction become wise; but he that taketh himself to want no instruction, or to be above learning, is in a desperate condition[d]. SERM. LXI.

It rendereth men in doubtful or difficult cases unwilling to seek, and unapt to take advice; he will not care for or admit any counsellor but himself; hence he undertaketh and easily is deceived, and incurreth disappointment, damage, disasters in his affairs. As it is most incident to weak, inconsiderate, lazy persons, who have not a capacity, will not yield attention, or take pains to get right notions of things, so it doth smother all industry, consideration, and circumspection; for such persons think they need no labour in searching truth, no care in weighing arguments, no diligence in observing things; they can easily at first sight descry all, and penetrate to the bottom of things; they have at easy rates the pleasure of fancying themselves wise; why should they spend farther pains to dispossess themselves of that pleasure, or to introduce another less satisfactory? thus *is the sluggard*, as Solomon saith, *wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason.* Prov. xxvi. 16.

It rendereth us very rash and precipitant in judging; for the first shews of things, or the most slender arguments, which offer themselves, being magnified, and aggravated from opinion concerning ourselves, do sway our judgment, and draw forth a sudden resolution from us; it must, we presently suppose, be very reasonable, because it seemeth reasonable to us.

Hence also we persist obstinate and incorrigible in error; for what reason can be efficacious to reclaim him whose opinion is the greater reason? what argument can be ponderous enough to outweigh his authority? how can he (the man of wisdom, the perspicacious and profound person) yield that he hath erred? how can he part

[d] Puto multos potuisse ad sapientiam pervenire, nisi putassent se pervenisse. *Sen. de tranq. an.* 1.

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with the satisfaction of being always in the right, or endure the affront of being any time baffled?

It rendereth men peevish and morose, so as to bear nobody that dissenteth from them, nor to like any thing, which doth not hit their fancy; to cross their opinion or humour, is to derogate from their wisdom; and being in their apprehension so injured, they find cause to be angry.

It rendereth them insolent, and imperious in conversation, so as to dictate, and impose their conceits upon others. He that is conceited of his own wisdom, will imagine that upon that advantage he hath a right to prescribe, others an obligation to submit; *eo ipso* he becometh a common master and judge; and they are culpable, who will not yield him a credulous ear, who will not stand to his decision.

Hence also do men become so carping and censorious; for if any man's words do not jump with their notions, if any man's actions be not conformable to their rules, they straightway rise up to condemn them of folly, of faultiness.

Yea hence men become intolerably pragmatical; for they conceit themselves better to know another's concernments than he himself doth, and so will intrude his advice, will be angry if his advice be not followed.

To such inconveniences and iniquities this ill disposition exposeth us, and to many others; for it is indeed that in effect, which the holy Scripture representeth as the source of all impious and wicked courses; to which men betray themselves, while taking themselves to be wise, they do stiffly adhere to their own imaginations and devices, although contrary to the prescriptions of divine wisdom, to the dictates of common reason, to the admonitions of sober and good men: *We will*, say they in the Prophet, *walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart:* and, *I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people; which walketh in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts:* and, *If he blesseth himself, saying, I shall have peace, though I*

Jer. xiii. 10. vi. 19.

Isa. lxv. 2. liii. 6.

Deut. xxix. 19.

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walk in the imagination of my heart: and, *So I gave them unto their own heart's lust, and they walked in their own counsels.* These are descriptions of bad men, implying self-conceit to be the root of their impiety. Ps. lxxxi. 12. Prov. i. 30, 31.

2. Again, we are apt to conceit highly and vainly of our moral qualities and performances; taking ourselves for persons rarely good, perfect, and blameless; apprehending no defects in our souls, or miscarriages in our lives, although, indeed, we are as full of blemishes, we are as guilty of faults as others; *There is*, saith the Wise Man, *a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness;* to this generation we belong, if we admire our virtues, if we justify our lives, if (as it is said of the Pharisee) we *trust in ourselves that we are righteous.* Isa. lxvi. 4. Prov. xxx. 12. Luke xviii. 9. xvi. 15. x. 29.

This practice doth include great folly, and it produceth great mischiefs.

It is very foolish, and argueth the greatest ignorance that can be; for such is the imperfection, the impotency, the impurity of all men, even of the wisest and best men, (discernible to them who search their hearts and try their ways, strictly comparing them to the rules of duty, God's laws and the dictates of reason,) that no man can have reason to be satisfied in himself or in his doings; every man looking into himself, shall find his mind so pestered with vain and filthy thoughts; his will so perverse, so froward, so weak, so unsteady; his desires so fond and unwarrantable; his passions so disorderly and ungovernable; his affections so misplaced, or at least so cold and dull in regard to their right objects; his resolutions toward good so weak and slack; his intentions so corrupt, or mixed with oblique regards; he that observeth his actions, shall in the best of them (as to the principles whence they rise, as to the ends they drive at, as to the manner of their performance) find so many great defailances, that he will see cause rather to abhor than to admire himself.

Who, let me ask, doth love God with all his soul, so as to place in him his total content and delight, so as to do all things out of love to him, with a regard to his honour Hier. in Lucif. cap. 6.

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and service? so as to be willing and glad to part with all things for his sake? who hath that constant and lively sense of God's benefits and mercies that he should have? who hath a perfect resignation of will to his pleasure, so as to be displeased with no event dispensed by his hand? who hath such a vigour of faith and confidence in him, as will support him in all wants, in all distresses, in all temptations, so as never to be disquieted or discouraged by them, so as to *cast on God* (as he is commanded) all the *cares* of his soul and *burdens* of his life? who constantly maintaineth a fervour of spirit, a steadiness of resolution, a clear and calm frame of soul, an abstractedness of mind from worldly desires and delights? who continually is fervent and undistracted in his devotion? who with an unwearied and incessant diligence doth watch over his thoughts? who doth entirely command his passions, and bridle his appetites? who doth exactly govern his tongue? who is perpetually circumspect over his actions? who loveth his neighbour as himself, seeking his good, and delighting therein as in his own; being sorry for his adversities, as if they had befallen himself? who feeleth that contrition of spirit, that shame, that remorse for his sins, or that detestation of them, which they deserve? who is duly sensible of his own unworthiness? Very few of us, surely, if we examine our consciences, can answer, that we are they who perform these duties; and if not, where is any ground of self-conceit? how much cause rather is there of dejection, of displeasure, of despising and detesting ourselves!

The Donatists—remissionem peccatorum sic datis, quasi nullum habeatis ipsi peccatum, &c. *Opt.* lib. 2.

There have indeed been sects of men (such as the Novatians and the Pelagians,) who have pretended to perfection and purity; but these men, one would think, did never read the Scripture, did never consult experience, did never reflect on their minds, did never compare their practice with their duty; had no conscience at all, or a very blind and stupid one. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?* was a question of Solomon, to the which he thought no man could answer affirmatively of himself: *If I justify myself, my own mouth shall*

Prov. xx. 9. Eccles. vii. 20. Job ix. 20. xv. 14. xxv. 4. iv. 18. ix. 2. (Psal. cxliii. 2.)

condemn me; if I say I am perfect, it shall prove me perverse: was the asseveration of that person, whose virtue had undergone the severest trials: *In many things we offend all,* was the confession of an Apostle in the name of the wisest and best men. SERM. LXI. Jam. iii. 2.

Such men indeed (in contemplation of themselves and of their doings) have ever been ready to think meanly of themselves, to acknowledge and bewail their unworthiness, to disclaim all confidence in themselves, to avow their hope wholly to be reposed in the grace and mercy of God; (in his grace for ability to perform somewhat of their duty; in his mercy for pardon of their offences;) to confess themselves, with Jacob, *less than the least of God's mercies;* with David, that they *are worms, and no men;* with Job, that they are *vile and* unable *to answer God,* calling them to account, *in one case of a thousand;* that they *abhor themselves, and repent in dust and ashes;* that *after they had done all, they are unprofitable servants.* And is he not very blind who doth see in himself those perfections which the greatest saints could not descry in themselves? is he not infinitely vain that fancieth himself more worthy than they did take themselves to be? Gen. xxxii. 10. Psal. xxii. 6. Job xl. 4. xlii. 6. ix. Luke xvii. 10.

In fine, every man is in some kind and degree bad, sinful, vile; it is as natural for us to be so, as to be frail, to be sickly, to be mortal: there are some bad dispositions common to all, and which no man can put off without his flesh; there are some, to which every man (from his temper, inclination, and constitution of body or soul) is peculiarly subject, the which by no care and pain can be quite extirpated, but will afford during life perpetual matter of conflict and exercise to curb them; conceit therefore of our virtue is very foolish.

And it breedeth many great mischiefs.

Hence doth spring a great security, and carelessness of correcting our faults; for taking ourselves to be well, we see not any need of cure, thence seek none, nor admit any. Matt. ix. 12. John ix. 41.

Yea, hence riseth a contempt of any means conducible to our amendment, such as good advice and wholesome re-

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proof; to advise such an one is to accuse him wrongfully, to reprove him is to commit an outrage upon his presumed integrity of virtue. Hence also proceedeth a neglect of imploring the grace and mercy of God; for why should persons of so great strength crave succour? how should they beg pardon, who have so little sense of guilt? It is for a weak person to cry, Lord, help me; it is for a Publican to pray, *God be merciful unto me a sinner.*

Luke xviii. 13.

It breedeth arrogance and presumption even in devotions, or addresses to God, inducing such persons in unseemly manner to justify themselves before God, to claim singular interest in him, to mind him, and as it were to upbraid him with their worthy deeds, to thank him for their imaginary excellencies; like the conceited Pharisee: *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers—I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*

Luke xviii. 11.

They cannot demean themselves toward God as miserable sinners, who fancy themselves as admirable worthies, and gallants in virtue.

Also, a natural result thereof is a haughty contempt of others, venting itself in a supercilious and fastuous demeanour; so it was in the Pharisees, *who*, saith St. Luke, *trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.* Such persons, observing or suspecting defects and misbehaviours in others, but discerning none in themselves, do in their opinion advance themselves above their brethren, and accordingly are prone to behave themselves toward them: such men as they are the especially good men, the godly, the saints, the flower of mankind, the choice ones, the darlings of God, and favourites of Heaven, the special objects of divine love and care: others are impure and profane, rejectaneous and reprobate people, to whom God beareth no good-will or regard: hence proceedeth a contemptuous disregard or estrangedness toward other men; like that of those separatists in the Prophet, who, notwithstanding they were *a people provoking God to anger continually to his face*, were yet, in conceit of their own special purity, ready to say, *Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou*: whereas those

Luke xviii. 9.

Is. lxv. 5.

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who, soberly reflecting on their nature, their hearts, their ways, do frame a right judgment of themselves, can hardly esteem any man worse than themselves; they perceive themselves so frail, so defectuous, so culpable, as to find great reason for their compliance with those apostolical precepts; *In lowliness of mind, let each man esteem others better than himself; In honour prefer one another.* Phil. ii. 3. Rom. xii. 10.

This likewise disposeth men to expect more than ordinary regard from others; and they are much displeased, if they find it not in degree answerable to their conceit of themselves; taking them for silly, envious, or injurious persons, who forbear to yield it: such excellent persons must in all things be humoured, and cockered, otherwise you greatly wrong them.

Hence also such men easily become discontented and impatient; for if they be crossed in any thing, if any misfortune toucheth them, they take it very ill; supposing they deserve it not, but are worthy of better usage and fortune.

In fine, as this causeth a man to behave himself untowardly in respect to all others, (toward God and toward his neighbour,) so thence he most unbeseemingly carrieth himself toward himself; he is no faithful friend, no good companion to himself; but a fond minion, a vile flatterer, or a profane idolater of himself: for (like Narcissus) being transported with conceit of his own incomparable beauty or excellency, he maketh love to and courteth himself; finding delight in such conceit, he by all means cherisheth it, glozing and *flattering himself* (as the Psalm hath it) *in his own eyes;* representing his qualities to his imagination in false shapes, he devoutly adoreth those idols of his brain. Psa. xxxvi. 2.

Farther,

3. Self-conceit is also frequently grounded upon other inferior advantages; upon gifts of nature, (as strength, activity, beauty;) upon gifts of fortune, (so called,) as birth, wealth, dignity, power, fame, success; upon these things men ordinarily much value themselves, and are strangely puffed up with vain opinion, taking themselves from them to be great and happy persons: but seeing (as we touched

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before) these things are in themselves little valuable, (as serving no great purpose, nor furthering our true happiness;) seeing they are not commendable, (as not depending on our free choice, but proceeding from nature or chance;) seeing they are not durable or certain, but easily may be severed from us; the vanity of self-conceit founded on them is very notorious, and I shall not insist more to declare it; I shall only recommend the Prophet's advice concerning such things: *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth:* that is, nothing within us or about us should elevate our minds, excepting the assurance that God doth govern the world, being ready to protect and succour us, to dispense mercy and justice to us; so that how weak and helpless soever in ourselves, yet confiding in him, we shall never be overwhelmed by any wrong or misfortune.

Jer. ix. 23, 24.

So much concerning Self-Conceit; the other parts of vicious Self-Love may be reserved to another occasion.

SERMON LXII.

OF SELF-CONFIDENCE, SELF-COMPLACENCE, SELF-WILL, AND SELF-INTEREST.

2 Tim. iii. 2.

For men shall be lovers of themselves, &c.

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II. Another like culpable kind of self-love is that of *self-confidence*; when men beyond reason, and without regard unto God's providence, do rely upon themselves and their own abilities, imagining that, without God's direction and help, by the contrivances of their own wit and discretion, by the prevalency of their own strength and courage, by their industrious care, resolution, and activity, they can compass any design, they can attain any good, they can arrive to the utmost of their desires, and become sufficiently happy; not considering, that of God *(in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways; in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind)* all our being and all our ability do absolutely depend; that he manageth and turneth all things, dispensing success according to his pleasure; that no good thing can be performed without the supply and succour of his grace, nothing can be achieved without the concurrence of his providence; that, *the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*;

Dan. v. 23.

Job xii. 10

Jer. x. 23.

[a] Ὅστις γὰρ αὐτὸς ἢ φρονεῖν μόνος δοκεῖ,
Ἢ γλῶσσαν ἢν ὐκ ἄλλος ἢ ψυχὴν ἔχειν,
Οὗτοι διαπτυχθέντες ὤφθησαν κενοί. *Soph. Antig.*

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that *the preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord;* that, although *a man's heart deviseth his way, yet the Lord directeth his steps;* that *no king is saved by the multitude of an host, a mighty man is not delivered by much strength, a horse is a vain thing for safety; The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong;* that (as St. Paul, one abundantly furnished with abilities suiting his designs as any man can be, doth acknowledge) *we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing, but our sufficiency is of God:* these oracles of truth, and even dictates of reason, no less than principles of religion, they consider not, who confide in their own abilities with which nature or fortune do seem to have furnished them.

Prov. xvi. 1. xvi. 9. xix. 21. xx. 24. Psal. xxxiii. 16, 17. Eccles. ix. 11. 2 Cor. iii. 5. ii. 16.

This is that instance of self-love, which the Wise Man biddeth us to beware of: *Trust*, saith he, *in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.* This is that which he condemneth as foolish, and opposite to wise proceeding: *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool; but whoso walketh wisely shall be delivered.*

Prov. iii. 5, 6. Prov. xxviii. 26.

This is that which smothereth devotion, and keepeth men from having recourse to God; while they think it needless to ask for that which they have in their power, or have means of obtaining; this consequently depriveth them of divine aid, which is afforded only to those who seek it, and confide therein.

—æquum mî animum ipse parabo.

This often engageth men to attempt things rashly, and causeth them to come off unhappily; God interposing to cross them, with purpose to cure their error, or confound their presumption.

From hence, if God ever suffereth their attempt to prosper, they sacrilegiously and profanely arrogate to themselves the success, *sacrificing to their own net*, and saying with him in the Prophet, *By the strength of my hand have I done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent.*

Habak. i. 16. Isa. x. 13.

This causeth most men to fail of true content here, and of happiness finally; while taking them to be, where they are not, at home, within their own hand or reach, they

neglect to search after them abroad, there where they only do lie, in the hand and disposal of God. SERM. LXII.

OF SELF-COMPLACENCE.

III. A like act of blameable self-love is *self-complacence*, that is, greatly delighting in one's self, or in the goods which he fancieth himself to enjoy, or in the works which he performeth; when men, in contemplation of their works and achievements, go strutting about, and saying with that vain prince, *Is not this great Babylon, that I have built?* Dan. iv. 30. when reflecting on their possessions, they applaud and bless themselves, like the *rich man* in the Gospel, *Soul*, (saith he, Luke xii. looking upon his accumulated store,) *thou hast much goods* 19. *laid up for many years.* Such vain soliloquies do men ordinarily make. Thou hast (saith a man to himself) rare endowments of soul; a wonderful skill and ability in this and that matter: thou art master of excellent things; thou hast managed very important business, hast accomplished hard designs, hast achieved brave feats, with great dexterity and admirable success, by thy wit and industry; thou hast framed and vented very curious orations, very facetious speeches, very nervous and pithy discourses; thou has put obligations upon this man and that; thou hast got much credit and interest amongst men; the world much looketh on thee, loveth and prizeth thee hugely, resoundeth with thy fame and praise; surely thy worth is notable, thy deserts are egregious; how happy art thou in being such a person, in performing such things, in enjoying such advantages! Thus with a spurious and filthy pleasure do men reflect upon and revolve in their minds the goods they deem themselves to possess, and the favourable occurrences that seem to befal them; being fond of their own qualities and deeds as of their children, which, however they are in themselves, do always appear handsome and towardly unto them; any little thing is great and eminent, any ordinary thing is rare, any indifferent thing is excellent to them, because it is theirs; out of any thing, how dry and insipid soever it is in itself, they suck a vain and foolish pleasure.

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Hence is that honest and pure delight which they should taste in faith and love toward God, in the hope of future celestial things, in the enjoyment of spiritual blessings, in the conscience of virtuous practice, quite choked or greatly damped.

Hence also that hearty contrition and sober sadness, which, by reflection upon their great defects and frequent miscarriages, they should continually maintain in their souls, is utterly stifled.

Hence also that charitable complacency in the welfare, and condolency with the adversities of their brethren, is suppressed; hence cannot they be satisfied with any thing done by others, they cannot apprehend the worthy deserts, they cannot render due commendation to the good deeds of their neighbour; for while men are so pleased with their own imaginary felicities, they cannot well discern, they will not be duly affected with, the real advantages or disasters of themselves or of others.

OF SELF-WILL.

IV. Another culpable kind of self-love is *self-will* (αὐθάδεια, pleasing one's self in his choice, and proceeding without or against reason;) when a man unaccountably or unreasonably, with obstinate resolution, pursueth any course offensive to others, or prejudicial to himself, so that he will not hearken to any advice, nor yield to any consideration diverting him from his purpose, but putteth off all with a —*Stat pro ratione voluntas:* Say what you can, let what will come on it, I will do as I please, I will proceed in my own way; so I am resolved, so it shall be.[b]

This is that generally which produceth in men the wilful commission of sin, although apparently contrary to their own interest and welfare, depriving them of the best goods, bringing on them most heavy mischiefs; this causeth them irreclaimably to persist in impenitence. Hence do they stop their ears against wholesome counsel; they

[b] Περὶ ὧν ἂν ἅπαξ τι εἴπω, μηκέτι με αὐθις πύθη. *Nero apud Dion. Cass.* Οἱ ἀμαθεῖς ἰσχυρογνώμονες. *Syncs. Calv.* Vid. Sen. Ep. 23. de Ben. 438. Arr. ii. 15.

harden their hearts against most pathetical and softening discourses; they *withdraw their shoulder; they stiffen their neck* against all sober precepts, admonitions, and reproofs; they defeat all means and methods of correction; they will not hear God commanding, entreating, promising, threatening, encouraging, chastising; they will not regard the advices and reprehensions of friends; the most apparent consequences of damage, disgrace, pain, perdition, upon their ill courses will not stir them; their will is impregnable against the most powerful attempts to win and better them: let all the wisdom in the world solicit them, with a *Turn at my reproof;* it shall have occasion to complain, *They would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof.*

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Neh. ix. 28. Jer. vii. 26. v. Deut. xxxi. 27. Prov. i. 25.

Prov. i. 23, 25, 29.

This is that also more particularly, which breedeth so much mischief to the public, which pestereth and disturbeth private conversation: this maketh conversation harsh, and friendship intolerable. [c]

Hence are men in their demeanour so peevish and froward, so perverse, and cross-grained, so stiff and stubborn; with much inconvenience to others, and commonly with more to themselves.

Αὐθάδια ἠ-ξημμία ξύνοικος. *Plut. ad Dionem. Ep.* 4.

Hence will they not submit to the commands of their superiors, they will not comply with the customs of their country, they will not be complaisant in conversation; but every where raise factious oppositions, kindle fierce contentions, maintain disorderly singularities: they care not how for enjoying their humour they break the peace of the world, they disturb the order of things, they create tumults and troubles in any society, they bring vexations and mischiefs on others, on themselves. They do not consider or value the great harm they bring upon the public, nor how much themselves do suffer by it; so they have their will, what if the state be plunged into confusion and trouble; what if their neighbours be sorely incommoded; what if themselves lose their ease and pleasure?

It must be just as they will have it; what if ten to one

[c] —— τούτῳ δ' ἀνδρὶ μήτ' εἶην φίλος,
Μήτε ξυνείην, ὅστις αὐτάρκη φρονεῖν
Πέφυκε, δούλους τοὺς φίλους ἡγούμενος. *Eurip.*

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think otherwise; what if generally the wisest men are agreed to the contrary; what if the most pressing necessity of affairs do not admit of it; what if public authority (those whom all equity doth constitute judges, and to whom God himself hath committed the arbitration thereof) do not allow it; yet so it must be, because they fancy it, otherwise they will not be quiet: so do they sacrifice the greatest benefits of society (public order and peace, mutual love and friendship, common safety and prosperity) to their private will and humour.

This is that which St. Paul so often did forbid in word, and discountenanced in practice: for the edification of others, to procure advantage to his endeavours, to shun offence, to preserve concord and amity, he waved pleasing his own desire and fancy, he complied with the conceits and humours even of those who were most ignorant and weak in judgment; he even subjected and *enslaved* himself to the pleasure of others, directing us to do the like: *We then*, saith he, *that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves: let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification; for even Christ pleased not himself*, (he adjoineth the great example of our Lord to enforce his own.) Again; *Give none offence*, saith he, *even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved: Be ye* (herein) *followers of me, as I am of Christ:* and again, *To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men that I might by all means save some: Though I be free from all men*, (that is, although I have no superior, that can command me, or oblige me in these matters,) *yet have I made myself servant to all, that I might gain the more.* What this excellent person was in this instance of managing ecclesiastical discipline, and promoting the Gospel, that, both in the same cases, and in the prosecution of all other designs, in all our conversation and practice, should we likewise be.

Rom. xv. 1, 2, 3.

1 Cor. x. 33. xi. 1.

1 Cor. ix. 22, 19.

We should in no case indulge our own humour or fancy, but ever look to the reason of the thing, and act accordingly, whatever it requireth.

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We should never act without striving with competent application of mind to discern clearly some reason why we act; and from observing the dictates of that reason, no unaccountable cause should pervert us: blind will, headstrong inclination, impetuous passion, should never guide, or draw, or drive us to any thing; for this is not to act like a man, but as a beast, or rather worse than a beast; for beasts operate by a blind instinct indeed, but such as is planted in them by a superior wisdom, unerringly directing them to a pursuit of their true good: but man is left *in manu concilii sui*, is obliged (under sore penalties) not to follow blind inclinations or instinct; but to act with serious deliberation and choice, to observe explicit rules and resolutions of reason.

Wisd. i. 12. Deut xxx. 19. 1 Cor. 10. 24.

OF SELF-INTEREST.

V. Another culpable sort of self-love is that of *self-interest;* when men inordinately or immoderately do covet and strive to procure for themselves these worldly goods, merely because profitable or pleasant to themselves, not considering or regarding the good of others, according to the rules of justice, of humanity, of Christian charity; when their affections, their cares, their endeavours do mainly tend to the advancement, advantage, or delight of themselves; they little caring what cometh on it, who loseth, who suffereth thereby.

Vid. Chrys. in 1 Cor. Or. 25.

They look upon themselves as if they were all the world, and no man beside concerned therein, or considerable to them; that the good state of things is to be measured by their condition; that all is well, if they do prosper and thrive; all is ill, if they are disappointed in their desires and projects.

The good of no man, not of their brethren, not of their friends, not of their country, doth come with them under consideration; what scandals do arise, what disorders are committed, what mischiefs are caused, they matter not, if they get somewhat thereby: what if the Church or State be reproached, what if the neighbourhood be offended or disturbed, what if the world cry out and complain, if they

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become richer by it, or have their passion gratified, or find some pleasure in it?

This is the chief spring of injustice; for from hence it is, that oftentimes men regard not what courses they take, what means they use, (how unjust, how base soever they be,) toward the compassing their designs; hence they trample upon right, they violate all laws and rules of conscience, they falsify their trusts, they betray their friends, they supplant their neighbour, they flatter and collogue, they wind about and shuffle any way, they detract from the worth and virtue of any man, they forge and vent odious slanders, they commit any sort of wrong and outrage, they (without regard or remorse) do any thing which seemeth to further their design.

This is the great source of uncharitableness; for from hence men affect no man otherwise than he seemeth able to serve their turn; the poor therefore is ever slighted and neglected by them as unserviceable; the rich only is minded and respected as capable to promote the ends; they become hardhearted toward others, not considering or commiserating their case; they will part with nothing from themselves to those who need their relief; they delight in nothing which doth not make for their advantage; all their shews of friendship and respect are mercenary, and mere trade; they do nothing *gratis*, or for love.

This is the great root of all the disorders and mischiefs in the world; this self-love prompteth men to those turbulent scramblings and scufflings, whereby good order is confounded; this engageth them to desert their stations, to transgress their bounds, to invade and encroach upon others with fraud and violence: did men with any conscionable moderation mind and pursue their own private interest, all those fierce animosites, those fiery contentions, those *bitter emulations*, those rancorous grudges, those calumnious supplantings, those perfidious cozenages, those outrageous violences, those factious confederacies, those seditious murmurings and tumultuous clamours, would vanish and cease; self-interest it is that gives life and nourishment to all such practices, the which embroil the world in discord and dis-

order. It is not out of pure madness or wanton humour that commonly men engage themselves and others in those base and troublesome courses, but out of design to get by it; hope of gain to be raked out of public ruins and disorders is the principle that moveth them, the reward they propound to themselves for their pains in meddling, toward the promoting them; like those who set fire on the town, that they may get opportunity to rifle and pillage.

—nullum furor egit in arma. Bella petunt magna victi mercede.—

He that taketh himself to be as but one man, (naturally like and equal to others,) conceiving that he ought to consider the interest and right of other men in the same rank with his own, that he in reason should be contented with that share which ariseth to him by fair means[d]; who thence resolveth to be satisfied with his own lot, to abide quiet in his station, to yield the same deference and compliance to others which he can presume or pretend to receive from them; who desires only to enjoy the gifts of Providence and the fruits of his industry in a due subordination to the public peace and welfare; he will not easily strive or struggle for preferments, he will not foment emulations or factions for his advantage, he will never design to cozen or supplant, to detract or calumniate for advancement of his ends; he thence will not contribute to the mischiefs and troubles in the world.

Self-interest therefore is the great enemy to the commonweal; that which perverteth all right, which confoundeth all order, which spoileth all the convenience and comfort of society.

It is a practice indeed (this practice of pursuing self-interest so vehemently, so especially above all things) which is looked upon and cried up as a clear and certain point of wisdom; the only solid wisdom; in comparison whereto those precepts which prescribe the practice of strict justice, ingenuous humanity, free charity, are but pedantical tattles, or notions merely chimerical; so the world now more than

[d] Ut quisque maxime ad suum commodum refert quæcunque agit, ita minime est vir bonus; ut qui virtutem præmio metiantur, nullam virtutem nisi malitiam putant, &c. *Cic. de Leg.* 1

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ever seemeth to judge, and accordingly to act; and thence is the state of things visibly so bad and calamitous; thence so little honesty in dealings, thence so little settlement in affairs are discernible. But how false that judgment is will appear if the case be weighed in the balance of pure reason; and most foolish it will appear, being scanned according to the principles of religion.

In reason is it not very absurd that any man should look upon himself as more than a single person; that he should prefer himself before another, to whom he is not in any respect superior; that he should advance his own concernment above the public benefit, which comprehendeth his good, and without which his good cannot subsist? Can any man rationally conceive that he can firmly thrive or persist in a quiet and sweet condition, when he graspeth to himself more than is due or fitting, when he provoketh against himself the emulation, the competition, the opposition, the hatred, and obloquy of all or of many other persons?

May not any man reasonably have the same apprehensions and inclinations as we may have? may not any man justly proceed in the same manner as we may do? will they not, seeing us mainly to affect our private interest, be induced, and in a manner forced, to do the like? Thence what end can there be of progging and scrambling for things? and in the confusion thence arising, what quiet, what content can we enjoy?

Again; Doth not nature, by implanting in our constitution a love of society and aversation from solitude, inclinations to pity and humanity, pleasant complacencies in obliging and doing courtesies to others, appetites of honour and good esteem from others, aptness to approve and like the practices of justice, of fidelity, of courtesy, of beneficence, capacities to yield succour and benefit to our brethren, dictate unto us, that our good is inseparably connected and complicated with the good of others, so that it cannot without its own impairing subsist alone, or be severed from the good of others; no more than a limb can without suffering and destruction be torn from the whole?

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Is there not to all men in some measure, to some men in a higher degree, a generosity innate, most lovely and laudable to all; which disposeth men with their own pain, hazard, and detriment, to succour and relieve others in distress, to serve the public, and promote the benefit of society; so that inordinately to regard private interest doth thwart the reason and wisdom of nature?

The frame of our nature indeed speaketh, that we are not born for ourselves; we shall find man, if we contemplate him, to be a nobler thing than to have been designed to serve himself, or to satisfy his single pleasure; his endowments are too excellent, his capacities too large for so mean and narrow purposes[e]. How pitiful a creature were man, if this were all he was made for? how sorry a faculty were reason, if it served not to better uses? he debaseth himself, he disgraceth his nature, who hath so low conceits, and pursueth so petty designs.

St. Paul. Rom. ix.

Nay, even a true regard to our own private good will engage us not inordinately to pursue self-interest; it being much hugged will be smothered and destroyed.

As we are all born members of the world, as we are compacted into the commonwealth, as we are incorporated into any society, as we partake in any conversation or company, so by mutual support, aid, defence, comfort, not only the common welfare first, but our particular benefit consequently doth subsist; by hindering or prejudicing them, the public first, in consequence our particular doth suffer; our thriving by the common prejudice will in the end turn to our own loss. As if one member sucketh too much nourishment to itself, and thence swelleth into an exorbitant bulk, the whole thence incurreth disease, so coming to perish or languish; whence consequently that irregular member will fall into a participation of ruin or decay: so it is in the state of human corporations; he

[e] Nec sibi, sed toti natum se credere mundo,
——nullosque Catonis in actus
Subrepsit, partemque tulit sibi nata voluptas.

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that in ways unnatural or unjust (for justice is that in human societies, which nature is in the rest of things) draweth unto himself the juice of profit or pleasure, so as thence to grow beyond his due size, doth thereby not only create distempers in the public body, but worketh mischief and pain to himself; he must not imagine to escape feeling somewhat of the inconvenience and misery which ariseth from public convulsions and disorders.

So doth reason plainly enough dictate; and religion with clearer evidence and greater advantage discovereth the same.

Its express precepts are, that we should aim to love our neighbour as ourselves, and therefore should tender his interests as our own; that we should not in competition with the greater good of our neighbour regard our own lesser good; that we should not seek our own things, but concern ourselves in the good of others; that we should not consult our own ease and pleasure, but should contentedly bear the burdens of our brethren: *Look not every man to his own things, but every man also to the things of others; Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth: Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ; Charity seeketh not its own:* these are apostolical precepts and aphorisms; these are fundamental rules and maxims of our holy religion.

Phil. ii. 4. 1 Cor. x. 24. Gal. ii. 6. 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

It chargeth us industriously to employ our pains, liberally to expend our goods, yea (in some cases) willingly to expose and devote our lives for the benefit of our brethren.

It recommendeth to us the examples of those who have underwent unspeakable pains, losses, disgraces, troubles, and inconveniencies of all kinds, for the furthering the good of others; the examples of our Lord and of his Apostles, who never in any case regarded their own interests, but spent and sacrificed themselves to the public welfare of mankind.

It representeth us not only as brethren of one family, who should therefore kindly favour, assist, and grace one

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another, but as members of one spiritual body, *(members one of another,)* compacted by the closest bands of common alliance, affection, and interest; whose good much consisteth in the good of each other; who should together rejoice, and condole with one another; who should care for one another's good as for our own; looking upon ourselves to gain by the advantage, to thrive in the prosperity, to be refreshed with the joy, to be graced with the honour, to be endamaged by the losses, to be afflicted with the crosses of our brethren; so that, *If*, as St. Paul saith, *one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.*

Rom. xii. 5. 1 Cor. xii. 25. Rom. xii. 15. 1 Cor. xii. 26.

These which I have already handled are the principal kinds of vicious self-love; there are farther some special acts of kin to them, sprouting from the same stock; which I shall touch: such as *Vain-Glory, Arrogance, Talking of One's Self, Thinking about One's Self.* Of these I shall treat more briefly.

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OF VAIN-GLORY, ARROGANCE, TALKING AND THINKING OF ONE'S SELF.

2 Tim. iii. 2.

For men shall be lovers of themselves, &c.

OF VAIN-GLORY.

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When a regard to the opinion or desire of the esteem of men is the main principle from which their actions do proceed, or the chief end which they propound to themselves, instead of conscience of duty, love and reverence of God, hope of the rewards promised, a sober regard to their true good, this is *vain-glory*. Such was the vain-glory of the Pharisees, who fasted, who prayed, who gave alms, who *did all their works that they might be seen of men*, and from them obtain the reward of estimation and applause: this is that which St. Paul forbiddeth; *Let nothing be done out of strife or vain-glory.*

Matt. vi. &c. xxiii. 5.

Phil. ii. 3.

When men affect and delight in praise from mean or indifferent things; as from secular dignity, power, wealth, strength, beauty, wit, learning, eloquence, wisdom, or craft: as, *There are many*, saith the Psalmist, *that boast themselves in the multitude of their riches.* Nebuchadnezzar was raised with the conceit of having built a palace for the glory of his majesty, Herod was puffed with applause for his oration, the Philosophers were vain in the esteem procured by their pretence to wisdom, the Pharisees were elevated with the praise accruing from external acts of piety, (fasting twice a week, making long

Psal. xlix. 6.

Φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοί. Rom. i. 22.

prayers, tithing mint and cumin;) all which things being in themselves of little worth, the affecting of praise from them is manifestly frivolous and vain. Honour should be affected only from true virtue and really good works. Rom. ii. 7. SERM. LXIII.

Those who seek glory from evil things, (who *glory in their shame,*) from presumptuous transgression of God's law, (hectorly profaneness and debauchery,) from outrageous violence, from overreaching craft, or from any bad quality, are not only vain-glorious, but impudent.

When men affect praise immoderately, not being content with that measure of good reputation which naturally doth arise from a virtuous and blameless life.

As all other goods, so this should be affected moderately.

It is not worth industry, or a direct aim.

When they are unwilling to part with the esteem of men upon any account, but rather will desert their duty than endure disgrace, prizing the opinion of men before the favour and approbation of God; as it is said of those rulers, who *believed in our Lord, but because of the Pharisees did not confess him, that they might not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory of men, rather than the glory that is of God;* and those to whom our Saviour said, *How can ye believe, who receive glory from one another, but do not seek the glory that is of God?* John xii. 43. John v. 44.

When they pursue it irregularly, are cunning and politic to procure it, hunt for it in oblique ways, lay gins, traps, and baits for it; such are ostentation of things commendable, fair speeches, kind looks and gestures, devoid of sincerity, &c. Such ways ambitious and popular men do use.

This practice is upon many accounts vain and culpable, and it produceth great inconvenience. Τὸ εὐτελὲς τοῦτο δοξάριον καὶ ἀπόπτυστον. *Naz. Ep.* 68.

1. It is vain, because unprofitable. Is it not a foolish thing for a man to affect that which little concerneth him to have, which having he is not considerably benefited? Such manifestly is the good opinion of men; how doth that reach us? Do we feel the commotions of their fancy? Doth their breath blow us any good?

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2. It is vain, because uncertain. How easily are the judgments of men altered! how fickle are their conceits! the wind of heaven is not more fleeting and variable than the wind of popular air. In a trice the case is turned with them; they admire and scorn, they approve and condemn; they applaud and reproach, they court and persecute the same person, as their fancy is casually moved, or as fortune doth favour a person. Histories are full of instances of persons who have been now the favourites of the people, presently the objects of their hatred and obloquy.

Qui dedit hoc hodie, cras auferet idem.

3. It is vain, because unsatisfactory. How can a man be satisfied with the opinion of bad judges; who esteem a man without good grounds, commonly for things not deserving regard; who cannot discern those things which really deserve esteem, good principles and honest intention? These only God can know, these only wise and good men can well guess at: it is therefore vain much to prize any judgment but that of God, and of wise men, which are but few. *Praise becometh not the mouth of a fool.*

—Stultus honores Sæpe dat indignis.

How also can a man rationally be pleased with the commendation of others, who is sensible of his so great defects, and conscious to himself of so many miscarriages? which considering, he should be ashamed to receive, he should in himself blush to own any praise.

Falsus honor juvat, &c. Quem nisi mendosum?

4. It is vain, because fond. It is ugly and unseemly to men; they despise nothing more than acting out of this principle. It misbecometh a man to perform things for so pitiful a reward, or to look upon it as a valuable recompense for his performances, there being considerations so vastly greater to induce and encourage him; the satisfaction of conscience, the pleasing God, and procuring his favour; the obtaining eternal happiness.

5. It is vain, because unjust. If we seek glory to ourselves, we wrong God thereby, to whom the glory thereof is due. If there be in us any natural endowment considerable, (strength, beauty, wit,) it is from God, the author of our being and life: is there any supervenient or acquisite perfection, (as skill, knowledge, wisdom;) it is from

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God, who gave us the means and opportunities of getting it, who guided our proceeding and blessed our industry: is there any advantage of fortune belonging to us, (as dignity, power, wealth;) it is the gift of God who dispenseth these things, who disposeth all things by his providence: is there any virtuous disposition in us, or any good work performed by us; it is the production of God, *who worketh in us to will and to do according to his good pleasure:* Phil. ii. 13. have we any good that we can call our own, that we have independently and absolutely made or purchased to ourselves; if not any, why do we assume to ourselves the glory of it, as if we were its makers or authors; it is St Paul's expostulation; *Who made thee to differ? what* 1 Cor. v. 7 John iii. 27. *hast thou, which thou didst not receive? and if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*

This is that which maketh this vice so odious to God, who is sensible of the injury done him, in robbing him of his due honour: how sensible he is he shewed in that great instance of smiting Herod with a miraculous vengeance; because he did not *give the glory to God*, but arrogated Acts xii. 23. glory to himself, receiving with complacence the profane flatteries of the people. He hath said, *I will not give my glory to another.*

6. It is vain, because mischievous. It corrupteth our mind with a lewd pleasure, which choketh the purer pleasures of a good conscience, spiritual joy and peace.

It incenseth God's displeasure, who cannot endure to see us act out of so mean and base a principle.

It depriveth us of the reward due to good works, performed out of pure conscience, and other genuine principles of piety. Ἀπέχουσι τὸν μισθόν. *They have their reward.* Matt. vi. 1.

7. It is vain, because unbeseeming us.

It is observable, that the word יְהַלֵּל signifieth to praise or applaud, and also to infatuate or make mad.

Glory doth sit unhandsomely upon us, who are so weak and frail, who are so impure and sinful, who are so liable to reproach and blame: it is like purple on a beggar—a

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panegyric upon a fly. When all is said that can be well of us, we are ridiculous, because a thousand times more might be said to our disparagement and disgrace. For one good quality we have many bad, for one good deed we have done numberless evil. The best things we have or do, yield greater matter of dispraise than commendation, being full of imperfection and blemish.

Job xii. 17. Isa. xliv. 25. Eccles. vii. 8. ii. 2.

Absolutely so; comparatively much more; what are we in comparison to God; whose excellency if we consider, and our distance from his perfections, how can we admit commendation? how can we take any share of that which is wholly his due?

If we consider even the blessed angels and saints, and how far short we come of them; what can we say, but praise them who are so worthy, and abhor ourselves who are so vile?

Seeing there are such objects of praise, how can it be conferred on a mortal, vile, wretched creature?

OF ARROGANCE.

When a man (puffed up with conceit of his own abilities, or unmeasurably affecting himself) doth assume to himself that which doth not belong to him; (more than in reason and justice is his due in any kind, more honour, more power, more wisdom, &c.)

When he encroacheth on the rights, invadeth the liberties, intrudeth into the offices, intermeddleth with the businesses, imposeth on the judgments of others. When he will be advising, teaching, guiding, checking, controlling others, without their leave or liking.

When he will unduly be exercising judgment and censure upon the persons, qualities, and actions of his neighbour.

These are instances and arguments of vicious self-love. He that doth rightly understand and duly affect himself, will contain himself within his own bounds, will mind his own affairs, will suffer every man undisturbedly to use his own right and liberty in judging and acting.

The effects of this practice are, dissensions, dissatisfac-

tions, grudges, &c. for men cannot endure such fond and unjust usurpations upon their rights, their liberties, their reputations. SERM. LXIII.

OF TALKING OF ONE'S SELF.

Περιαυτολογία *Talking about one's self* is an effect and manifest sign of immoderate self-love.

It may seem a very slender and particular matter, but is of great use to be considered and corrected.

To talk much of one's self, of his own qualities, of his concernments, of his actions, so as either downrightly to commend one's self, or obliquely to insinuate grounds of commendation; to catch at praise; or, however, to drive on our own designs and interests thereby.

It is an argument of self-love, proceeding from a fulness of thought concerning one's self, and a fond affection to one's own things; *(Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;* assuredly we think much of that, and we like it greatly, concerning which we are prompt to discourse: the imaginations and affections discharge themselves at the mouth.) Matt. xii. 34.

This is a foolish and hurtful practice. For,

1. It is vain, and hath no effect. We thereby seek to recommend ourselves to the opinion of men; but we fail therein; for our words gain no belief. For no man is looked upon as a good judge or a faithful witness in his own case; a good judge and a faithful witness, must be indifferent and disinterested; but every man is esteemed to be favourable, to be partial in his opinion concerning himself; to be apt to strain a point of truth and right in passing testimony or sentence upon himself: he, therefore, that speaketh of himself is not believed, his words have no good effect on the hearers: it is true what the Wise Man observeth; *Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness, but a faithful man who can find?* (but it is hard to find one who, in making report or passing judgment concerning himself, will be faithful and just.) Καυχᾶσθαι οὐ συμφέρει μοι. Prov. xx. 6. 2 Cor. xii. 1.

2. Yea it usually hath a contrary effect, and destroyeth

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that which it aimeth at. Self-commendation is so far from procuring a good opinion, that it breedeth an evil one.

Men have a prejudice against what is said, as proceeding from a suspected witness; one who is biassed by self-love,

2 Cor. x. 18. and bribed by self-interest to impose upon them. *Not he that commendeth himself is approved.*

2 Cor. x. 13. Ἐχὶ τὰ ἄμετρα καυχησόμεθα.

It is fastidious, as impertinent, insignificant, and insipid; spending time, and beating their ears to no purpose; they take it for an injury to suppose them so weak as to be moved by such words, or forced into a good conceit.

It is odious and invidious; for all men do love themselves, no less than we ourselves; and cannot endure to see those who affect to advance themselves and reign in our opinion.

It prompteth them to speak evil of us; to search for faults to cool and check us.

It is therefore a preposterous and vain way to think of gaining credit and love: men thereby infallibly lose or depress themselves.

Of all words those which express ourselves and our things, *I* and *mine*, &c. are the least pleasing to men's ears.

It spoileth conversation; for he that loveth to speak of himself, doth least love to hear others speak of themselves, and so is not attentive.

If a man have worthy qualities and do good deeds, let them speak for him; they will of themselves extort commendation; his silence about them, his seeming to neglect them, will enhance their worth in the opinion of men. Prating about them, obtruding them upon men, will mar their credit; inducing men to think them done not out of love to virtue, but for a vain-glorious design. Thus did Cicero, thus have many others blasted the glory of their virtuous deeds.

Γίγονα ἄφρων καυχώμενος. 2 Cor. xii. 11. 2 Cor. xi. 17.

3. Supposing you get the belief and the praise you aim at, to have complacence therein is bad or dangerous; it is a fond satisfaction, it is a vicious pleasure; it puffeth up, it befooleth.

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4. It is against modesty. It argueth the man hath a high opinion of himself: if he believe himself what he saith, he hath so; if not, why would he persuade others to have it?

Modesty cannot without pain hear others speak of him, nor can with any grace receive commendations; it is therefore great impudence to speak of himself, and to seek praise.

5. We may observe it to be a great temptation to speak falsely. Men, when they affect commendation, will gladly have it to the utmost; are loath to wrong themselves, or to lose any thing; they will therefore at least speak to the extreme bounds of what may be said in their own behalf; and while they run upon the extreme borders of truth, it is hard to stop their career, so as not to launch forth into falsehood: it is hard to stand upon the brink, without falling into the ditch.

It is therefore advisable in our discourse to leave ourselves out as much as may be; never, if we can help it, to say, *I*, *mine*, &c. never seeking, commonly shunning and declining occasion to speak of ourselves; it will bring much convenience and benefit to us.

Our discourse will not be offensive; we shall decline envy and obloquy; we shall avoid being talked of; we shall escape temptations of vanity; we shall better attend to what others say, &c.

If we will be speaking of ourselves, it is allowable to speak sincerely and unaffectedly concerning our infirmities and faults; as St. Paul does of himself.

There are some cases wherein a man may commend himself; as in his own defence, to maintain his authority, to urge his example, &c. so doth St. Paul often. He calleth it folly to boast, (because generally such it is,) yet he doth it for those ends. 2 Cor. xii. 5. xi. 30. *Plut.* πῶς τις ἑαυτὸν ἐπαινέσει.

Let another praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips. Prov. xxvii. 2.

THINKING OF OURSELVES.

Thinking of ourselves with glee and pleasure; this is a great nourisher of immoderate self-love; for the more they

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indulge to a gazing upon themselves with delight, the more they grow in love, the more passionately they come to dote on themselves.

It is good to reflect inward, and to view our souls; but we should do it so as to find a wholesome displeasure and regret in beholding ourselves so foul and impure, so weak and defectuous, so ugly and deformed: if we do thus, we shall not over-love ourselves.

Some general Remedies of Self-Love.

1. To reflect upon ourselves seriously and impartially, considering our natural nothingness, meanness, baseness, imperfection, infirmity, unworthiness; the meanness and imperfection of our nature, the defects and deformities of our souls, the failings and misdemeanours of our lives. He that doeth this cannot surely find himself lovely, and must therefore take it for very absurd to dote on himself. He will rather be induced to dislike, despise, abhor, and loathe himself.

2. To consider the loveliness of other beings superior to us; comparing them with ourselves, and observing how very far in excellency, worth, and beauty they transcend us; which if we do, we must appear no fit objects of love, we must be checked in our dotage, and diverted from this fond affection to ourselves. It cannot but dazzle our eyes and dull our affections to ourselves.

If we view the qualities and examples of other men, who in worth, in wisdom, in virtue, and piety, do far excel us; their noble endowments, their heroical achievements; what they have done and suffered in obedience to God, (their strict temperance and austerity, their laborious industry, their self-denial, their patience, &c.) how can we but in comparison despise and loathe ourselves?

If we consider the blessed angels and saints in glory and bliss; their purity, their humility, their obedience; how can we think of ourselves without contempt and abhorrence?

Especially if we contemplate the perfection, the purity,

the majesty of God; how must this infinitely debase us in our opinion concerning ourselves, and consequently diminish our fond affection toward things so vile and unworthy?

3. To study the acquisition and improvement of charity toward God and our neighbour. This will employ and transfer our affections; these drawing our souls outward, and settling them upon other objects, will abolish or abate the perverse love toward ourselves.

4. To consider, that we do owe all we are and have to the free bounty and grace of God; hence we shall see that nothing of esteem or affection is due to ourselves; but all to him, who is the fountain and author of all our good.

5. To direct our minds wholly toward those things which rational self-love requireth us to regard and seek: to concern ourselves in getting virtue, in performing our duty, in promoting our salvation, and arriving to happiness; this will divert us from vanity: a sober self-love will stifle the other fond self-love.

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PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN.

Rom. xii. 17.

Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

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THE world apparently is come to that pass, that men commonly are afraid or ashamed of religious practice, hardly daring to own their Maker by a conscientious observance of his laws. While profaneness and wickedness are grown outrageously bold, so that many *declare their sin as Sodom;* piety and virtue are become pitifully bashful, so that how few have the heart and the face openly to maintain a due regard to them? Men in nothing appear so reserved and shy as in avowing their conscience, in discovering a sense of their duty, in expressing any fear of God, any love of goodness, any concern for their own soul. It is wisdom, as they conceive, to compound with God, and to collude with the world; reserving for God some place in their heart, or yielding unto him some private acknowledgment; while in their public demeanour they conform to the world, in commission of sin, or neglect of their duty; supposing that God may be satisfied with the invisible part of his service, while men are gratified by visible compliance with their ungracious humours.

Isa. iii. 9.

Such proceeding is built on divers very fallacious, absurd, and inconsistent grounds or pretences; whereby men

egregiously do abuse themselves and would impose on others; namely these, and the like: SERM. LXIV.

They would not, by a fair show and semblance of piety, give cause to be taken for hypocrites; whereas, by dissembling their conscience, and seeming to *have no fear of God before their eyes*, they incur an hypocrisy no less criminal in nature, but far more dangerous in consequence, than is that which they pretend to decline.

They would not be apprehended vain-glorious for affecting to serve God in the view of men; whereas often at the bottom of their demeanour a most wretched and worse than Pharisaical vain-glory doth lie; they forbearing the performance of their duty merely to shun the censure or to gain the respect of the vilest and vainest persons.

They would be deemed exceedingly honest and sincere, because forsooth all their piety is cordial, pure, and void of sinister regards to popular esteem; whereas partial integrity is gross nonsense; whereas no pretence can be more vain, than that we hold a faithful friendship or hearty respect for God, whom we openly disclaim or disregard; whereas also it is easily discernible, that although their piety is not, yet their impiety is popular, and affected to ingratiate with men.

They would be taken for men of brave, courageous, and masculine spirits, exalted above the weaknesses of superstition and scrupulosity; whereas indeed, out of the basest cowardice, and a dread to offend sorry people, they have not a heart to act according to their duty, their judgment, their best interest.

They would seem very modest in concealing their virtue; while yet they are most impudent in disclosing their want of conscience; while they are so presumptuous toward God, as *to provoke him to his face* by their disobedience; Isa. lxv. 3. while they are not ashamed to wrong and scandalize their Jer. vi. 17. viii. 12. brethren by their ill behaviour.

They would not be uncivil or discourteous in thwarting the mind and pleasure of their company; as if in the mean time they might be most rude toward God in

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affronting his will and authority; as if any rule of civility could oblige a man to forfeit his salvation; as if it were not rather most cruel discourtesy and barbarous inhumanity to countenance or encourage any man in courses tending to his ruin.

They would not be singular and uncouth, in discosting from the common road or fashion of men; as if it were better to leave the common duty than the common faults of men; as if wisdom and virtue were ever the most vulgar things; as if the way to heaven were the broadest and the most beaten way; as if rarity should abate the price of good things; as if conspiracy in rebellion against God might justify or excuse the fact; as if it were advisable to march to hell in a troop, or comfortable to lie there for ever among the damned crew of associates in wickedness.

They cannot endure to be accounted zealots or bigots in religion; as if a man could love or fear God too much; or be over-faithful and careful in serving him; as if to be most earnest and solicitous (not in promoting our own fancies, but) in discharging our plain duties could be justly reproachable, or were not indeed highly commendable.

These things I may hereafter fully declare; in the mean time it is manifest that such a practice is extremely prejudicial to religion and goodness; so that it may be very useful to employ our meditations upon this text of the Apostle, which directly doth oppose and prohibit it.

The same text he otherwhere (in his second Epistle to the Corinthians) doth repeat in the same terms, (only inserting a clause more fully explaining his sense,) backing his precept with his own example; for We, saith he there, did so manage the business of collecting and dispensing alms, as *to avoid that any man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us; providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but in the sight of men.*

2 Cor. viii. 20, 21.

The words do imply a precept of very large extent, and touching a great part of our duty; even all thereof which

is public and visible; for which we are accountable to the world, whereof man can take any cognizance; which concerneth all our speech and conversation, all our dealing and commerce, all our deportment relating to human society, civil or spiritual.

I shall first a little consider its meaning and design; then I shall propose reasons and inducements to its observance; then I shall declare the folly of those principles and pretences which obstruct that observance.

I. The meaning of it is, that we should have a special care of our external demeanour and conversation, which cometh under the view and observation of men; that it be exempted from any offence or blame; yea, that it be comely and commendable. Ἀμεμπτοι. Phil. ii. 15. Ἀνέγκλητοι. Col. i. 22.

The terms in which it is expressed are notably emphatical; we are directed προνοεῖν, *to provide*, to use a providence and forecast in the case: ere we undertake any design, we should deliberate with ourselves, and consider on what theatre we shall act, what persons will be spectators, what conceits our practice may raise in them, and what influence probably it will have on them. We should not rush on into the public view with a precipitant rashness, or blind negligence, or contemptuous disregard, not caring who standeth in our way, who marketh what we do, what consequence our proceeding may have on the score of its being public and visible: we should advise beforehand, lay our business, and on set purpose order our behaviour with a regard to those to whose sight and notice we expose it, foreseeing how our actions may affect or incline them. So we must provide; what things? καλὰ, things fair and handsome; things not only good, innocent, and inoffensive to the sight of men; but goodly, pleasant, and acceptable to well-disposed beholders; such as our Apostle doth otherwhere recommend, when he chargeth us to regard, ὅσα σεμνὰ, *whatever things are venerable*, ὅσα προσφιλῆ, *whatever things are lovely*, ὅσα εὔφημα, *whatever things are of good report*, εἴ τις ἔπαινος, *whatever things are laudable*; and when he doth exhort us *to walk* εὐσχημόνως, *handsomely* and decently, in a comely garb and fashion of life: this Phil. iv. 8. Rom. xiii. 13. 1 Thess. iv. 12.

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may add an obligation to some things not directly prescribed by God, which yet may serve to adorn religion, but it cannot detract any thing from what God hath commanded; it doth comprehend all instances of piety and virtue practicable before men; it certainly doth exclude all commission of sin, and omission of duty; for that nothing can be fair or handsome which is ugly in God's sight, which doth not suit to his holy will.

Such things we must provide, ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων, *before all men;* not only before some men, to whom we bear a particular respect, of whom we stand in awe, upon whom we have a design; but universally before all men, as having a due consideration of all those upon whom our deportment may have influence; not despising or disregarding the observation of the meanest or most inconsiderable person whatever.

But in this practice, to avoid misapprehensions, we must distinguish; for it is not required that we should do all things openly, nor intended that we should do any thing vainly; but that we should act constantly according to the nature and reason of things, with upright and pure intention: the Apostle doth not mean that in our practice we should resemble the Pharisees, whom our Lord reproveth for *doing their alms before men*, for loving *to pray standing in the synagogues*, for *doing all their works to be seen of men;* performing those acts of piety openly *in the corners of the street*, which should have been done secretly *in the closet;* and so doing them out of vanity and ambitious design, to procure the good opinion and praise of men: he doth not intend that we should assume a formal garb of singular virtue; that we should aim to seem better than we are, counterfeiting any point of religion or virtue; that we should affect to appear even as good as we are, exposing all our piety to common view: that we should *sound a trumpet before us*, making an ostentation of any good deeds, catching at reputation or applause for them; that we should do any commendable thing chiefly to obtain the good opinion of the world, or to escape its censure: infinitely far it was from the Apostle's intention, that we

Matt. vi. 1, 5. Matt. xxiii. 5.

Matt. vi. 2.

should be *like those whited sepulchres, which appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness;* that is, like those Pharisees, who *did outwardly appear righteous, but within were full of hypocrisy and iniquity:* No;

Matt. xxiii. 27, 28.

In some cases we must be reserved, and keep our virtue close to ourselves; and ever under a fair show there must be a real substance of good, together with an honest intention of heart; a good conscience must always lie at the bottom of a good conversation; the outside must be good, but the best side must be inward; we must endeavour to sanctify our life and conversation, but we must especially labour to purify our hearts and affections.

Τὸ σεμνὸν ἁπλάστως—Τὸ εὔφημον ἀψοφητί. *Ant.* i. §. 9. 2. §. 5.

Join the precept with others duly limiting it, and it doth import, that with pure sincerity and unaffected simplicity (void of any sinister or sordid design) we should in all places, upon all occasions, in all matters, carefully discharge that part of our duty which is public, according to its nature, season, and exigency, that is publicly: not abstaining from the practice of those good deeds, which cannot otherwise than openly be well performed; or the conspicuous performance whereof is absolutely needful in regard to God's law and the satisfaction of our conscience, is plainly serviceable to the glory of God, is very conducible to the edification of our neighbour, or which may be useful to good purposes concurrent with those principal ends: we should as *good trees* from a deep root of true piety, in due *season* naturally, as it were, shoot forth good fruits, not only pleasant to the sight, but savoury to the taste, and wholesome for use; as St Paul, who, as he saith of himself, that he *did provide things honest in the sight of all men,* so he also doth affirm, that *his rejoicing was this, the testimony of his conscience, that in simplicity, and godly sincerity—he had his conversation in the world.*

Matt. vii. 17. Luke vi. 44. Psal. i. 3. 2 Cor. viii. 21. 2 Cor. i. 1.

There are indeed some duties, or works of piety and virtue, the nature whereof directeth, that in the practice of them we should be reserved; such as those wherein the world is not immediately concerned, and which may with best advantage be transacted between God and our own

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souls; as private devotion, meditation on God's word and will, the discussion of our consciences, voluntary exercises of penitence, and the like: such also be those wherein the intervention or notice of few persons is required; as deeds of particular charity in dispensing alms, good advice, friendly reproof; the which sort of duties our Lord hath taught us to perform *in secret*, or as closely as we may; studiously keeping our observance of them from the eyes of men; thereby assuring our sincerity to ourselves, and guarding our practice from any taint of vanity or suspicion of hypocrisy; as also in some cases avoiding to cause prejudice or offence to our neighbours: *Take heed*, saith our Lord, *that ye do not your alms before men*; and, *Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet*; and, *Thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast*; and, *If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.*

Ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ. Matt. vi. 4, 6. Matt. vi. 1. Matt. vi. 6. Matt. vi. 17. Matt. xviii. 15.

But there are divers other duties, the discharge whereof necessarily is notorious and visible; the public being the stage on which they are to be acted; the transaction of them demanding the intercourse of many persons, who are the objects or instruments of them, or are somewise concerned in them: such is that negative duty, of a general nature and vast comprehension, which we may call innocence; that is, a total abstinence from sin, or forbearance to transgress any divine command; which is a part of Job's character, *That man was perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil:* the which duty, being to be practised at all times in every place, cannot avoid being observable.

Psal. xxxiv. 14. Job i. 1. ii. 3.

Such are also divers positive duties; for such is the profession of our faith in God, and acknowledgment of his heavenly truth, revealed in the Gospel of our blessed Saviour; which is styled *confessing our Lord before men*, and is, as St. Paul telleth us, indispensably requisite to salvation.

Rom. x. 10.

Such is joining in that public adoration, whereby the honour and authority of God are upheld in the world with

seemly expressions of reverence; the which is to be performed solemnly, and, as the holy Psalmist speaketh, *in the midst of the congregation.* Psal. xcix. 5. cxxxii. 7. xxii. 22.

Such is zeal in vindication of God's honour, when occasion requireth, from blasphemous aspersions, or from scandalous offences against it.

Such are justice, equity, fidelity, and ingenuity in our dealings; meekness, gentleness, patience, kindness, and courtesy in our converse; peaceableness in our carriage, and charitable beneficence; the objects whereof are most general, according to those apostolical precepts, *That our moderation* (or our equity and ingenuity) *be known unto all men;* that we *shew all meeknes to all men; that we must not strive, but be gentle unto all men;* that we be *patient toward all men;* that we *pursue peace with all men;* that *as we have opportunity, we should do good unto all men;* should *abound in love one towards another, and towards all men;* should ever *follow that which is good, both among ourselves and to all men;* should *liberally distribute to the saints and to all men:* in performing which so general duties, how can a man pass *incognito*, how can he so deal with all men indiscernibly? Phil. iv. 5. Tit. iii. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 24. 1 Thess. v. 14. Heb. xii. 14. Rom. xii. 18. Gal. vi. 10. 1 Thess. iii. 12. 1. Thess. v. 15. 2 Cor. ix. 13.

Such are likewise gravity and modesty in our behaviour; sweetness, soberness, aptness to profit and edify the hearers in our discourse; moderation and temperance in our corporeal enjoyments; industry in our business and the works of our calling; integrity in the management of any office or trust committed to us; a constant practice of which virtues is not only enjoined to us as our particular duty, but for public example. 2 Tim. iv. 12.

Such are seasonable defence of the truth, and opposing of error; the commendation of virtue, and reprehension of notorious sin, with the like. Tit. ii. 4, 7.

Such things must be practised because indispensable duties; but they cannot be done out of sight, or barring the observation of men; they do involve publicness; they carry a light and lustre with them, attracting all eyes to regard them; it is as impossible to conceal them as to hide the sun from all the world, or to *conceal a city that is set* Matt. v. 14.

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upon a hill; for nothing, as St. Chrysostom saith, *doth render a man so illustrious, although he ten thousand times would be hid, as an open practice of virtue.* [a]

Wherefore *the works of mercy*, saith St. Austin, *the affection of charity, the sanctity of godliness, the incorruptness of chastity, the moderation of sobriety, these are perpetually to be held, whether we are in the public or at home; whether before men or in the closet, whether we speak or keep silence.* [b]

In the practice of them, it is true, we mainly should respect the approving our conscience to God, with expect-
1 Cor. iv. 3. ation of our recompense from him; not being much con-
1 Thess. ii. 4, 5. cerned in the judgment or pleasure of men, purely con-
Gal. i. 10. sidered in themselves; not aiming at any interest of credit or profit from them as a reward of our work; [c] *We ought*, as St. Austin saith, while we do good, *to be seen, but we ought not to do it that we may be seen; the end of our joy, the bound of our comfort, should not be there; so that we should think ourselves to have obtained the whole fruit of a good work, when we have been seen and commended:* [d] No,
Eph. vi. 6. *whatever we do*, we should, as the Apostle directeth, do it *as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the*
Col. iii. 23, 24. *heart; doing it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord we shall receive the reward of the inheritance.*

Yet nothing in the mean time should hinder us from performing such necessary duties; strictly and exactly with our most diligent care and endeavour, even in that light which their nature doth carry in it.

[a] Οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτως ἐπίσημον ἄνδρα ποιεῖ, κἂν μυριάκις λανθάνειν βέληται, ὡς ἀρετῆς ἐπίδειξις. *Chrys. in Matt.* v. 16.

[b] Opera misericordiæ, affectus charitatis, sanctitas pietatis, incorruptio castitatis, modestia sobrietatis, semper hæc tenenda sunt; sive cum in publico sumus, sive cum in domo; sive ante homines, sive in cubiculo; sive loquentes, sive tacentes. *Aug. in Ep.* 1. *Joh. Tract.* 8.

[c]—non cum fama sed cum rerum natura deliberandum est. *Sen. Ep.* 81.

[d] Si times spectatores non habebis imitatores; debes ergo videri, sed non ad hoc debes facere, ut videaris, non ibi debet esse finis gaudii tui, non ibi terminus lætitiæ tuæ, ut putes te totum fructum consecutum esse boni operis, cum visus fueris atque laudatus. *Ibid.*

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How much soever of our virtue or piety out of humility or modesty we may conceal, yet we must be careful of discovering any vice or irreligion, either by notoriously committing any thing forbidden by God, or omitting any thing commanded by him.

This we should not do upon any terms, upon any pretence whatever; no wicked fashion should engage us, no bad example should inveigle us, no favour of men should allure us, no terror should scare us thereto; we should not out of fear, out of shame, out of complaisance, out of affected prudence or politic design; out of deference to the quality, dignity, or authority of any person; out of regard to any man's desire or pleasure; we should not to decline offence, envy, blame, reproach, ill treatment, or upon any such account, comply in any sinful practice, wave any duty, neglect any season of performing a good deed, whereby we may glorify God, or edify our neighbour, or promote the welfare of our own soul.

To such a practice, according to the intent of St. Paul's injunction, we are obliged; and thereto we may be induced by divers considerations, particularly by those which we shall now propose.

1. We may consider that the public is the proper, natural, and due place of goodness; it should dwell in the light, it should walk freely and boldly everywhere, it should expose itself to open view, that it may receive from rational creatures its due approbation, respect and praise; it by publicness is advanced, and the more it doth appear, the more beautiful, the more pleasant, the more useful it is; yielding the fairer lustre, the greater influence, the better effects; thereby diffusing and propagating itself, becoming exemplary, instructive, and admonitive; drawing lovers and admirers to it; exciting and encouraging men to embrace it: wherefore it is very absurd that it should sculk or sneak; it is a great damage to the public, that it should retire from common notice.

Bona conscientia prodire vult et conspici, ipsas nequitia tenebras timet. *Sen. Ep.* 27.

On the other hand, it is proper for wickedness never to appear or to shew its head in view; it should be confined to darkness and solitude, under guard of its natural keepers,

Omne malum aut timore aut

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shame and fear; it should be exterminated from all conversation among rational creatures, and banished to the infernal shades: publicness doth augment and aggravate it; the more it is seen, the more ugly, the more loathsome, the more noxious it is; its odious shape being disclosed, its noisome steams being dispersed, its pestilent effects being conveyed thereby.

pudore natura perfudit. *Tert. Apol.* cap. 1. Job xxiv. 13—17.

Wherefore to smother virtue (that fair child of light) in privacy, and to vent sin *(the works of darkness)* openly, is quite to transplace things out of their natural situation and order; according to which we are taught by our Lord, that *he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be manifest;* and by St. Paul, that *every one who doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh he to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved;* so indeed it is, and will be, where conscience retaineth its due sway and force; where a due respect and reverence are preserved for goodness.

Rom. xiii. 12. Eph. v. 11. John iii. 21. Eph. v. 13.

As that any good cometh from detection of sin is an accidental advantage; so that any mischief doth ever follow the manifestation of virtue is an unnatural abuse; the which may well be prevented: there can be no danger of acting any good most evidently, if we do withal act sincerely, having purified our hearts from dishonest intention and from ambitious vanity; the fear of which should not wholly drive virtue under the hatches and bring vice upon the stage. But,

2. We should consider, that we cannot really in any competent or tolerable measure be good men, without approving ourselves such in our conversation before men.

Whatever may be pretended, it commonly doth happen, and it ever is to be suspected, that the invisible piety which is not accompanied with visible conscientiousness is false, or is no piety at all; or that they who have little care and conscience to serve God publicly, have much less to serve him privately; or that such as betray a scandalous negligence of their ways will hardly maintain a careful watch over their hearts; for the same causes (be it profane infidelity, or looseness of principles, or supine incogitancy,

or sloth, or stupidity) which dispose them to disregard God and his laws before the world, more effectually will incline them to neglect God and forget their duty by themselves, where beside their own conscience there is no witness, no judge, no censor to encourage or reproach them. But admit it possible, and put case, that sometimes the heart and conversation may not run parallel; that a man may better govern his interior thoughts and affections than he doth manage his exterior behaviour and actions; that a man secretly may cleave to God, although he seemeth openly to desert him; yet this will not suffice to constitute or denominate a man good; because much of goodness, as we have shewed, even the nobler half thereof, (that part whereby God is most glorified, and whereby the world is most benefited,) doth lie in open and visible practice: that virtue therefore must be very imperfect, that obedience must be very lame, which is deficient in so great a part. James ii.10.

As there can be no fair pretence to goodness, where so little thereof is conspicuous; so there can be no real integrity thereof, where so much of duty is wanting.

Our Lord hath taught us, that *every tree is known by its fruit*; and St. James saith, that *faith is shewed by works*; and so it is, that a man can hardly be good in any reasonable degree without appearing such. Impiety may, but piety cannot be quite concealed. As gold may be counterfeited, (for all is not gold that glisteneth, yet true gold always doth look like gold;) so although bad men sometimes may seem good, yet good men also must seem such, appearing in their own native temper and lustre. Luke vi. 44. James ii.18.

Goodness cannot be disguised in the shape of evil, because simplicity and innocence are essential ingredients of it; any mixture of notorious sin, any visible neglect of duty assuring (yea formally making) a want of it, or a real defect therein: it may be daubed with false aspersions, it may be dimmed by the breath of unjust and uncharitable censures; but wiping them off, its natural hue certainly will appear.

Wherefore if we would satisfy ourselves in our own con-

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sciences, or justify ourselves to others, that we are truly good, we must (without partiality, or distinguishing between public and private) like the holy Psalmist, *have respect unto all God's commandments;* we, like Zachariah and Elizabeth, must *walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless;* we must, like David, *accomplish all God's will;* we must observe St. Paul's rule *to abstain* ἀπὸ παντὸς εἴδους πονηροῦ, *from* both *every kind of evil,* and *every bad appearance.* But farther,

(Num. xv. 39, 40) Ps. cxix. 6. Luke i. 6. Ποιεῖν πάντα τὰ δικαιώματά μου. Acts xiii. 22. 1 Thes. v. 23.

3. A great care of our good behaviour before men is necessary in regard to Almighty God; whose just interest is preserved, whose due homage is payed, whose honour is promoted thereby; the same being greatly prejudiced and impaired by the contrary defailance.

It is a clear point of justice toward God, as to render all obedience to him, so particularly that which consisteth in an open acknowledgment and service of him; for as he made and doth preserve not only the heart, but the tongue, the members, the whole man, so all must concur in rendering their tribute of reverence and service to him.

Rom. 12. 1.

The Apostle doth prescribe, that *whatever we do, we should do all to the glory of God;* and well he might, seeing that to glorify God is indeed to execute the main design of our creation, to apply our faculties to their best use, to achieve the most proper and most excellent work whereof we are capable; to do that which is the worthiest and happiest employment of angels, which all the company of heaven, with most ardent desire, with most zealous ambition, with restless endeavour, doth pursue; and this we cannot better, we cannot otherwise do, than by an apparent good conversation. For,

1 Cor. x. 31.

He that apparently in all his actions maketh conscience of obeying God's laws, thereby doth evidence his firm persuasion concerning the existence and providence of God; doth adhere to him against all adversaries of piety, and all temptations to rebellion: doth avow his sovereign majesty and authority; doth yield him due veneration and obedience; doth shew right apprehensions of him, and just affections towards him; implying that he doth most highly

esteem him, doth most heartily love him, doth chiefly dread him, doth repose his trust and hope in him for all his happiness; hath a great opinion of his wisdom, a great awe of his power, a great sense of his goodness; the which practice is in itself a direct and formal glorification of God, in his own person. SERM. LXIV.

He also thereby doth farther promote the glory of God, instructing, exciting, and encouraging others to the like practice of deferring respect and service to God; for naturally men have such a capacity, such aptitude, such proclivity to religion, (or to the acknowledgment and worship of their Maker,) that when they behold others seriously and earnestly pursuing it, they are easily drawn to conspire therein; especially those who are not utterly perverted and corrupted by ill custom.

And whereas good conversation hath a native beauty, affecting beholders with delight; whereas the fruits of virtue have a pleasing sweetness, grateful to all who taste them; men from that sight and that sense will presently be moved to commend the wisdom, and to bless the goodness of him, who was pleased to institute so excellent a religion, to enact so beneficial laws, to prescribe so wholesome duties to us: for *when*, saith the most divine father, *an infidel shall see thee, a believer, to be* κατεσταλμένον—*staunch, sober, orderly, he will be astond, and will say, In truth, great is the God of Christians: What men hath he made! what persons out of what persons hath he made them! how from men hath he made them angels! If one abuse them, they do not rail; if one smite them, they do not resent; if one injure them, they pray for him that doeth the offence; they know not to remember ill turns, they skill not to be vain, they have not learnt to lie, they cannot abide to forswear, or rather to swear at all, but sooner would choose to have their tongue cut out, than to let an oath slip out of their mouth.*

Ἀρετῆς ἄσκησις τίμιον μὲν κτῆμα τῷ ἔχοντι, ἡδιστον δὲ θέαμα τοῖς ἐπιτυγχάνουσι. *Bas. Ep.* 42.

Ὅταν γὰρ ἄπιστος, &c. *Chrys.* ἀνδρ. θ'. (p. 524.)

So may we really glorify God; and otherwise than by open practice we cannot do it; for glory doth require a public stage; it implying, as Seneca saith, *the consent of many worthy persons* declaring their esteem; it being, as

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Cicero defineth it, *the agreeing praise of good men, with an incorrupted vote judging well of an excellent virtue* [e].

Wherefore toward our being enabled to glorify God, two things must concur; that we be good men, and that we be openly such.

That we be good men, because otherwise our commendation will have no worth, or weight; for *praise is not comely in the mouth of sinners:* it is no ornament to be commended by ill men, to whose words little regard is due, little trust can be given.

Non est speciosa laus in ore peccatoris. Eccles. xv. 9.

That we be good openly, avowing God in practice conducing to his honour; otherwise no glory can accrue to him from our goodness: we may serve God, and please him in private; but we cannot by that service glorify him; at least at present, and here in this world. It is true, the closest piety will yield glory to God at the last, when *our Lord shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in them that believe;* but to design such a future glorification of God is not enough; it is our duty to glorify God now, that we may be rewarded for it, and that he may requite us with glory hereafter.

2 Thess. i. x.

God himself telleth us in the Psalm, *Whoso offereth praise, he glorifieth me;* and how can praise be offered, or to what purpose will it be offered, otherwise than apparently, either in word or deed, by oral or by real expression, to the ears or to the eyes of men, so as to occasion in them the production of worthy conceptions and due affections toward God? In such a manner the holy man did offer it, who said, *I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee; I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation:* he did it sometimes with his mouth, which is a notable part of our conversation; but we may do it continually by our life; for *He*, saith

Psal. l. 23.

Psal. xxii. 22. cxi. 1. cvii. 32. cix. 30.

[e] Gloria consensum multorum exigit—Consentire in hoc plures insignes et præstantes viri debent, ut claritas sit. *Sen. Ep.* 102.

Gloria est consentiens laus bonorum incorrupta voce bene judicantium de excellente virtute. *Cic.* 3. *Tusc. init.*

Gloria est frequens de aliquo fama cum laude. *Cic. de Inv.* ii. 39.

St. Austin, *who praiseth God with his tongue, cannot do that always; but he that praiseth God by his manners can always do it*[f]. SERM. LXIV.

This motive is by the great masters of our Christian practice frequently urged; for,

St. Paul wisheth the Philippians *to be filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God;* he prayeth for the Thessalonians, that *God would fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ might be glorified in them;* he particularly doth incite the Corinthians to works of charity, that *by that ministration* men might be induced to *glorify God*, rendering him thankful praise for their beneficial obedience. Phil. i. 11. 2 Thess. i. 11—— 2 Cor. ix. 11—13.

St. Peter likewise doth exhort all Christians *to have their conversation honest among the Gentiles, that they might by their good works, which they should behold, glorify God, in the day of visitation*, (that is, perhaps, when they carefully do view and reflect on them.) 1 Pet. ii. 12. Ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐπισκοπῆς.

Our Lord himself thus chargeth his disciples, *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven;* they did observe his command, and the effect did follow, many being converted to God no less by the radiant integrity of their life, than by the persuasive efficacy of their doctrine: and, *In this*, saith our Lord again, *is my Father glorified, if ye bear much fruit:* what fruit was that? what but of good works, visible to the eye and perceptible to the taste; otherwise how could men thence find cause to glorify God? Matt. v. 16. Chrys. John xv. 8.

In fine, this is declared to be the peculiar design of our religion, or of the whole Christion institution; to this end we are made *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that we should shew forth the praises* (or virtues) *of him, who hath called us out of dark-* 1 Pet. ii. 9.

[f] Qui Deum laudat lingua, non semper potest; qui moribus Deum laudat, semper potest. *Aug. in* 1. *Ep. Joh. Tr.* 8.

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ness to his marvellous light; not only by our profession, but in our practice declaring his goodness.

Tit. i. 16.

On the other hand, by stifling our virtue and conscience, in an open compliance with sin, or neglect of our duty, we greatly shall dishonour God; for thereby in effect we deny him and desert him; we injure his majesty, and disclaim our allegiance to him; we intimate our mean opinion of him, and small affection to him; we betray our want of reverence to his excellency, of dread to his greatness, of love to his goodness, of hope in his promises and gracious overtures of mercy, of fear in regard to his severe justice and fierce menaces; so immediately we dishonour him, and we thereby also do countenance disrespect and disobedience to him; and our behaviour tendeth to produce or to confirm the like irreligious dispositions of mind and impious practices in others; so that with horrible disingenuity we cross the design of our creation, and violate our greatest obligations toward our Maker.

Indeed what greater affront or more heinous indignity can we offer to God, than openly before the world, *by* the most real expression of *our works, to deny* and disown *him;* than to be notoriously ashamed or afraid to avow him for our Lord and Master; than to express no sense of our duty to him, no reverence of his authority, no gratitude for his benefits to us; than visibly to prefer any other consideration or worldly advantage before a regard to his will and pleasure?

Tit. i. 16.

In this, open sin doth outgo private wickedness, and putteth down even the worst hypocrisy, (beside its own,) that it not only offendeth God, but sorely woundeth his honour, and exposeth his glorious name to contempt? by which consideration such miscarriages are frequently aggravated in holy Scripture; so in the Prophets God complaineth of his people, for having by their scandalous crimes *profaned his holy name among the heathen;* so St. Paul expostulateth with the Jew, *Thou that boasteth of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?* so Nathan told David, that God would punish him, *because*

Ezek. xxxvi. 21.—Is. lii. 2. Rom. ii. 23. 2 Sam. xii. 14.

by his bad deed he had given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. But, SERM. LXIV.

4. We should be careful of our good behaviour in the sight of men, that we may thereby maintain the dignity and repute of our Christian profession, which by our naughty or negligent demeanour will be much disparaged and disgraced.

Most evident it is to reason, that a visible practice, conformable to the rules of our religion, cannot otherwise than exceedingly commend and grace it; for how can the goodness of a rule more surely obtain its due commendation, than from its being applied to observable practice and experience?

Assuredly charity, meekness, humility, patience, sobriety, discretion, and all Christian virtues, as in themselves they are very amiable and venerable to all men, as they yield great benefit and much pleasure to those whom their consequences do touch; so they do ingratiate the law which prescribeth them, they bring esteem to the principles whence they are derived; *he*, as the Apostle saith, *that in these things serveth Christ, is* both *acceptable to God and approved of men*, as the follower of a most excellent rule. Rom. xiv. 18.

We may also consider, that a conspicuous practice, according to our religion, is a demonstrative proof that we do seriously and firmly embrace it, or that we are heartily and steadily persuaded of its truth; which is no small credit to any profession; arguing that it hath a good foundation in reason, apt to bottom and sustain a solid faith.

And as thereby we pregnantly do evidence that we ourselves do highly value the noble privileges, the excellent promises, the precious rewards exhibited in the Gospel; so we thereby do breed a like esteem in others; upon whom the authority of men apparently virtuous and conscientious infallibly will have a forcible influence.

Such a practice will have a great stroke toward evincing the truth and reality, the perfect excellency, the notable strength and efficacy of our religion; plainly shew-

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ing, that it is not a mere name, an idle pretence, a weak fancy, a dry speculation, a chimerical dream; but a vigorous and masculine principle, able to produce most worthy fruits of substantial goodness, *profitable to men*; conducible to our own welfare, and to the benefit of others.

As gallant actions, becoming a noble rank, elevated above the vulgar level, do illustrate and dignify nobility itself; so doth a worthy conversation, beseeming our high station in the heavenly kingdom, our near alliances to God, those splendid titles and glorious privileges assigned to every faithful Christian in the evangelical charter, render our state admirable, and make it seem an excellent advantage to be a Christian.

Hence in the apostolical writings, an observance of the evangelical laws is so much and often enforced by this consideration; for upon this account we are exhorted to a careful discharge of our duty, that *we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things;* we are urged to *have our conversation worthy of the Gospel;* to *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called,* to behave ourselves *as worthily becometh saints,* (that is, persons instituted in so holy a religion, and designed to so peculiar excellency in virtue;) to *walk as children of the light,* (that is, of truth and knowledge revealed from heaven;) to *walk worthy of God, who hath called us into his kingdom and glory; worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work;* the which enforcements of duty do imply a visible practice, producing the visible effects of ornament and credit to our religion, recommending it to the minds and consciences of men.

Tit. ii. 10.
Phil. i. 27.
Eph. iv. 1.
Eph. v. 3.
Rom. xvi. 2.
Eph. v. 8.
1 Thess. ii. 12.
Col. i. 10.

Contrariwise, the defect of good conversation before men in Christians is upon divers accounts disgraceful to our religion. For,

It tempteth men to judge, that we ourselves do not heartily believe its truth or value its worth; that we do not approve its doctrine for reasonable, or take its advantages for considerable; or deem the name and state of a Christian to be honourable; seeing we are not concerned to own them, or do not care to engage our reputation in

avowing and abetting them in that way which doth best signify our mind and meaningg; for men certainly will judge of our sense not so much by what we say as from what we do; not by our verbal profession or pretence, but from our practice, as the surest indication of our heart. SERM. LXIV.

Wherefore when they hear us to confess our faith, and see us act like infidels, they will be forced to esteem us either for subdolous hypocrites or for inconsistent fools; who assume the name of Christians, and pretend to great advantages thence, yet in effect do not mind or regard them; highly commending the rules of our religion, but not at all observing them; greatly admiring the example of our Saviour, but not caring to imitate it; describing heaven for a most happy place, but not striving to get thither in the sole way which our Lord prescribeth, of faithful and diligent obedience to his precepts.

Seeing, I say, this repugnance between our profession and our practice, will induce men to charge us with hypocrisy or folly; and if the professors be taken for counterfeits or fools, the profession itself will hardly scape from being held imposture or folly.

Our religion, at least, will thence be exposed to the censures of being no better than a fond device, and a barren notion, unpracticable, ineffectual, and insignificant to any good purpose.

The visible misbehaviour, I say, of Christians will assuredly derive obloquy and reproach on Christianity, if not as bad, yet as vain, impotent, impertinent and useless; especially those who are disaffected to it will hence take advantage to insult upon it with contemptuous scorn; To what, will they say, do your fine rules serve? what effects do your glorious hopes produce? where are the fruits of that holy faith and heavenly doctrine which you so extol and magnify?

Whereas also bad conversation commonly doth not only deprive men of the benefits which our religion promiseth, but doth carry with it hurtful fruits; men that see or feel them will be apt to impute them to religion.

gΕἰ δὲ τις ἐλεγχθῇ πράξας τι ἄνομον, ὁ τοιοῦτος ὐ μόνον ἑαυτὸν ἔβλαψεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ βλασφημίαν προσέτεριψε τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ. *Const. Ap.* ii. 8.

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If a Christian be unjust, censorious, factious, anywise offensive or troublesome, although irreligion be the cause of such things, yet religion must bear the blame, and they presently exclaim,

Quantum religio potuit suadere malorum.

Whence St. Paul (who as a powerful instructor doth impress matters of duty by the most proper motives) doth often and upon all occasions urge this consideration; he chargeth us *to give no offence in any thing, that the ministry* (or evangelical dispensation) *be not blamed*, or exposed to the censure of any captious Momus; he biddeth us to forbear harsh judgment and all uncharitable dealing, that *our good be not evil spoken of:* he presseth the discharge of our duty in each calling and relation, that by neglect thereof the Gospel be not defamed: *Let*, saith he, *as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed:* and, *Let women be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed;* and, *I will that younger women marry, bear children, guide the house*, (so as) *to give no occasion to the adversary* (that is, to persons disaffected to Christianity) *to speak reproachfully* (of it): which discourse, by clear parity of reason, may be applied to any other state or relation.

2Cor. vi. 3. Ἵνα μὴ μωμηθῇ.

Rom. xiv. 16.

1Tim. vi. 1.

Tit. ii. 3.

1Tim. v. 14.

Now, seriously, what greater mischief can we do, what heavier guilt may we contract, than by working dishonour to God's adorable name, than by casting reproach on God's heavenly truth, than by drawing a scandal on that holy religion, which the Son of God came down from heaven to establish, for the glory of God and salvation of mankind? Surely, next after directly blaspheming God, and defying religion with our own mouths, the next crime is to make others to do so, or in effect to do it by their profane tongues.

Rom. ii. 24. δι' ὑμᾶς.

There remain divers arguments of very great moment, which the time will not suffer me to urge; and, therefore, I must reserve them to another occasion.

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PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN.

ROM. xii. 17.

Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

I HAVE formerly discoursed upon this apostolical precept; and having declared the meaning of it, (briefly importing that we should have a special care of our external behaviour, coming under the view and observation of men, that it be perfectly innocent and inculpable,) I did propose divers motives inducing to the observance of it; but divers others of great importance the time would not allow me to urge; I shall, therefore, now proceed to offer them to your consideration. SERM. LXV.

I did then shew, that a regard to the reason and nature of things, to the satisfaction of our conscience, to the honour of God, and to the credit of our religion, did require from us a good conversation before men; I now farther add, that,

I. The real interest of piety and virtue do exact such a conversation, as the most effectual way of upholding, advancing, and propagating them among men.

Example is a very powerful thing either way, both for attraction to good, and seduction to evil; such is the nature of men, that they are more apt to be guided by the practice of others than by their own reason, and more easily can write after a copy than by a rule; that they

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are prone to imitate whatever they see done, be it good or bad, convenient or inconvenient, profitable or hurtful, emulating the one, and aping the other; that they love to be in the fashion, and will go anywhither in company, presuming of support, defence, and comfort therein; that they will satisfy their minds and justify their doings by any authority, deeming that laudable or allowable, or at least tolerable and excusable, for which they can allege precedents; judging, that if they are not singular, they are innocent, or however not very culpable; that hardly they will undertake any thing without countenance, whereby their modesty is in some measure secured, and partners engaged to bear a share with them in the censure to which their deportment is liable. Hence a visible good conversation will have a great efficacy toward the promotion and propagation of goodness; the authority of that being adjoined to the native worth and beauty, to the rational plausibility, to the sensible benefit of virtue, will cogently draw men to it; it will be a clear pattern, whereby they shall be informed what they are obliged and what they are able to perform; it will be a notable spur, smartly exciting them to mind and pursue their duty; it will be a vigorous incentive, inflaming their courage, and provoking an emulation to do well.

The visible succour and countenance of many, espousing the cause of goodness by their practice, will assuredly bring it into request and vogue, and thence into current use and fashion; so just a cause cannot fail to prosper, having any reasonable forces to maintain it; it will have great strength, great boldness and assurance, when a considerable party doth appear engaged on its side.

Yea, sometimes even the example of a few will do it great service; the rarity giving a special lustre to their virtue, and rendering it more notable; according to that intimation of the Apostle, when he thus doth exhort the Philippians to a cheerful and forward practice of goodness; *Do all things*, saith he, *without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and*

Phil. ii. 14, 15.

perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.

A good conversation doth notify good men to one another, and draweth them together, and combineth them in a party, for the protection of goodness, heartening and aiding one another therein.

Such advantages goodness doth always need; for it ever hath in the world many adversaries, striving by violent force to beat it down, or by treacherous fraud to supplant it; who use their authority and interest to suppress it; who by their evil example do seduce from it; who labour by detraction to blast it, by scorn and reproach to discourage it, by divers temptations and baits to entice from it; who combining their forces with the wicked spirits, and with the corrupt inclinations of men, do raise a mighty party for wickedness.

Wherefore, to balance such oppositions, goodness doth need friends to maintain it; not only friends in heart, or secret well-wishers; but open friends, who frankly will avow it, and both in word and deed will stoutly abet it.

A demure, bashful, timorous friendship, will rather prejudice than help it; for nothing will more animate its foes to assail and persecute it, than observing its friends to slink and sneak: when good men hide their faces, as if they were ashamed of their goodness, then bad men will grow more impudent and insolent in their outrages against it.

Wherefore, if we would have goodness hold up its head, we must openly take its part; if we would not be guilty of its ruin, we must stand up to uphold it; for whoever openly complieth with sin, or neglecteth his duty, may well be charged with its ruin; since if thou so desertest goodness, another after thy pattern may do the like, and a third may follow him; so the neglect of it may soon be propagated, until at length it may be quite abandoned, and left destitute of support: if it doth not thus happen, it will as to thee be accidental, and no thanks to thee for its better fortune.

The declension of piety is not perhaps more to be

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ascribed to any other cause than to this, than that men who approve goodness in their hearts are so backward to shew it in their practice; that good men do so affect retirement and wrapping up their virtue in obscurity; that most men think it enough if in the cause of religion against profaneness and dissoluteness they appear neuters, and do not impugn it; for if in a time of infection all sound men do shut up themselves, and all sick men walk abroad, how necessarily must the plague reign in the place?

II. Charity toward our neighbour demandeth from us a great care of our conversation before men.

The law of charity, which is the great law of Christianity, doth oblige us earnestly to further our neighbour's good of all kinds, especially that which is incomparably his best good, the welfare of his soul; which how can we better do, than by attracting him to the performance of his duty to God, and by withdrawing him from the commission of sin? And how can we do that without an apparently good conversation, or without plainly declaring, as occasion sheweth, for virtue, both in word and deed? how can a shy reservedness conduce to that end? what will invisible thoughts or affections of heart confer thereto?

Rom. xiv. 19. 1 Cor. xiv. 26.

It is a precept of charity, that we should *pursue things wherewith one may edify another:* and how can we perform that duty, without imparting our mind, and, as it were, transfusing it into others; so as by converting them from error and sin, by instilling good principles, by exciting good resolutions, to lay in them a foundation of goodness, or by cherishing and improving the same to rear a structure of virtue in them? how can we mutually edify without mutually advising virtue, exhorting to it, recommending and impressing it by our exemplary behaviour?

Παρακαλεῖτε ἀλλήλους. 1 Thess. v. 11. Heb. x. 24 Εἰς παροξυσμόν.

The Apostles do enjoin, that we should *exhort one another, and edify one another;* that we should *consider one another, to provoke* (or to whet and instigate one another) *to love and to good works;* the which can nowise be performed, without expressly declaring for goodness and remarkables acting in its behalf: to commend and press it by word is a part of our duty; but not all of it, nor suf-

ficient to this purpose; especially seeing we cannot urge that with good confidence, nor shall be held serious in pleading for it, which we do not ourselves embrace in practice; for how can we expect that our reason should convince others, when it doth not appear really to have persuaded ourselves, when our doings evidently do argue the weakness of our discourse?

Words hardly will ever move without practice, although practice sometimes will persuade without words; according to that of St. Peter, *Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear,* (or due reverence to them.) 1 Pet. iii. 1.

Again; We are frequently commanded to shun *the giving any offence*, or *the putting a stumbling-block, or an occasion to fall, in the way of our brother;* that is, to do any thing, which anywise may confer to his incurring any sin: the which precepts are violated not only by positive and active influence, by proposing erroneous doctrine, evil advice, fraudulent enticements to sin, or discouragements from duty; but also by withholding the means serving to prevent his transgression; such as a tacit indulgence or connivance, when good admonition may reclaim him; the omission of good example, when it is seasonable, and probably may prove efficacious: for these neglects have a moral causality, inducing or encouraging the commission of sin; our silence, our forbearing to act, our declining fair opportunities to guide him into the right way will be taken for signs of approbation and consent; and consequently as arguments to justify or to excuse bad practice, in proportion to the authority and esteem we have; which ever will be some in this case, when they favour the infirmity of men. 1 Cor. x. 32. viii. 9. 2 Cor. vi. 3. Rom. xiv. 13.

Charity doth farther oblige us, upon just cause, and in due season, to check and reprove our neighbour misdemeaning himself; for, *Warn the disorderly*, saith the Apostle; and, *Have no fellowship*, saith he, *with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them;* and, *Thou* 1 Thess. v. 14. Eph. v. 11. Levit. xix. 17.

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shalt not, saith the Law, *hate thy brother in thy heart, thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him:* where forbearance of reproof is implied to shew not only a defect of charity, but hatred of our brother; and a good reason is intimated for it, because in so doing we suffer sin to lie upon him; not hindering his progress in it, not endeavouring his conversion from it: but reproof is an overt act; involving somewhat of openness and plain freedom, such as the Wise Man doth prefer before close good-will; for, *Open rebuke*, saith he, *is better than sacred love.*

Prov. xxii. 5.

We are all thus far *the keepers of our brethren*, and it is a charge incumbent on us, by all good means to preserve them from the worst of mischiefs.

In fine, there is plainly nothing more inconsistent with true charity, than such a compliance with sin or neglect of duty in the sight of our neighbour, which is scandalous, or may prove contagious to him; for how can we love him, whose chief good, whose eternal welfare we do not tender? whom we do not fear to seduce into the way of extreme misery, or do not at least care to lead into the way of happiness? whom without any check we can suffer to forfeit the best goods, and to incur the saddest calamities?

Wherefore if the love of ourselves and a sober regard to our own welfare be not sufficient to induce us, yet a charitable disposition and a concernedness for our neighbour (for our brethren, our relations, our friends) should move us to a good, innocent, virtuous, fruitful, and exemplary conversation: if we do not care to save ourselves, yet let it pity us to damn and destroy others by our negligence.

Rom. xiv. 15.

III. But if charity will not move us, yet justice, exacting from us a care of our good conversation before men, should constrain us thereto.

Exemplary and edifying conversation is a debt which we owe to the world, a good office imposed on us by the laws of common humanity.

When without our own hurt or inconvenience we can do considerable good to our neighbour, he hath a title

thereto, (granted by the common Author of our nature, the absolute Lord of all we are or have,) and he may justly demand it from us; as we in like case might claim it from him, and certainly would in matters agreeable to our humour expect it: wherefore seeing good conversation not only doth not harm or incommode us, but is most beneficial to ourselves, and it exceedingly may benefit our neighbour, it is most just that we should afford it to him; it is no more than fair dealing to do it; to neglect it is a real injury to him.

To set ill example before our neighbour, or (which is in part and in effect the same) to withhold good example from him, (for not to give a good example is a bad thing, and so a bad example; this,) I say, is plainly a great iniquity, and a wrong to him. For,

Is it not an injury to offer a cup of poison to any man, to invite him to drink it, to be his taster of it, so drawing him to take it off without suspicion or fear of deadly mischief? is it not an injury to forbear warning him thereof, or not to deter him from it, when it standeth before him, and he is ready to put it to his mouth? would not such a man in all conscionable esteem pass for a murderer of his neighbour?

Is it not a great wrong to carry any man out of his way (out of a right, easy, fair, and safe road) into mazes, thickets, and sloughs, or into intricate, foul, dangerous by-ways? Is it not wrongful, when he doth wander or err, not to reduce him thence, not to set him in the right way?

Is it not very foul dealing to bring a man to a steep precipice, and thence to leap down before him? is it not so, not to stop him, when he is on the brink, and blindly moving forward to cast himself down headlong?

If these be injurious dealings, then palpably it is far more such to yield any enticements or encouragements, yea not to put obstructions, if we are able, to our neighbour's incurring sin, which to his soul is all those things; the most baneful venom, the most woful exorbitancy, the most pernicious gulf that can be.

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We *by sinning* do not only, as the Wise Man saith, *wrong our own souls*, but we do also wrong the souls of others; drawing them or driving them, by the efficacious impulse of our example, into mischief and misery; for, *When*, saith St. Paul, *ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ:* he there speaketh of bad example; the which he not only affirmeth to be sinful in regard of Christ, but calleth it sinning against our brethren[a]; and supposeth that we thereby do wound or smite their conscience; which to do is surely no less wrong to them, than if we should assault, beat, and wound their bodies; the wounds of conscience being of all most grievous, and producing most insupportable affliction; according to that of the Wise Man, *The spirit of a man will bear his infirmities, but a wounded spirit who can bear?*

Prov. viii. 36.

1 Cor. viii. 12.

Τύπτοντες αὐτῶν τὴν συνείδησιν ἀσθενοῦσαι—

Prov. xviii. 14.

Indeed by thus hurting our neighbour, we do him a wrong, not only very great in itself, but such as may probably be irreparable, for which hardly we can ever be able to make him any restitution or compensation; for a better example scarce will reach all whom a bad example hath touched; the best example hardly will avail to undo that which a bad example hath done; if thereby we have engaged our neighbour in sin, we by no means can restore his lost innocence, or prevent his saying, *Woe be to me, for I have sinned:* it will be very difficult to recover him into that state (that sound condition of soul) from which we did move him; it will, however, cost him, if not a final ruin, yet a sore repentance; the pangs whereof no compensation which we can yield will requite: the wounds which we thereby do inflict may rankle and prove incurable; they assuredly will find no easy cure; they must, however, either in consequence or in the correction be very painful; and they will leave an ugly scar behind them.

Lam. v. 16.

1 Cor. viii. 11.

The injustice of this practice may also farther appear upon divers special accounts.

[a] Ὁ γὰρ ἁμαρτάνων ἐπὰν ἴδῃ τινα ὅμοια αὐτῷ δρῶντα οἰκοδομηθήσεται εἰς τὸ τὰ αὐτὰ ποιεῖν. *Const. Ap.* ii. 17.

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All men esteem pity a debt which one man oweth to another, as liable to grief and misery, (the obligation whereto is written in the bowels of each man;) which pity will incline to succour the object of it in danger or distress; wherefore every man by the natural law is bound to endeavour the prevention or the rescue of another falling into mischief; acccording to that of St. Jude, *Of some have compassion, making a difference, and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire;* whence to draw men into sin by ill practice, or not to restrain them from it by good, is unjust, as a pitiless, hardhearted, cruel thing[b]. Jude 22,23.

Again; All men hold flattery to be a practice very abusive, or more than simply wrongful; as with injury joining contempt and cozenage; taking advantage of a man's infirmity to work prejudice to him; it is indeed a mischievous, a pernicious, and withal a perfidious, an insidious, an ensnaring practice; for, *A flattering mouth*, saith the Wise Man, *worketh ruin;* and, *A man that flattereth his neighbour, spreadeth a net for his feet:* but flattery is not only verbal; the worst flattery is not that whereby men sooth and gloze with their lips, encouraging others by fictitious commendations to persist in bad courses; there is a tacit flattery, when by our connivance at sin we seem to approve it; there is a real flattery, when by our compliance with sin we recommend it to our camerades; these do not look so grossly, yet do insinuate our mind, and commonly do inveigle to sin more effectually; men being more apt to trust our deeds than our words, being more pleased in our vouching their actions by a participation in them, and running a common hazard with them, than in our straining to commend or to excuse them: whence it is, that gross flattery hath its effect chiefly upon simpler folks, but this subtile flattery doth often gull and abuse persons of greatest capacity. Prov. xxxi. 30. Favour is deceitful. Prov. xxvi. 28. Prov. xxix. 5.

Again; A good conversation before men is a part of that due respect which we owe to them. There is a regard

[b] 1 Sam. iii. 13. (His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.)

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and a kind of reverence to be had toward every man; which should engage us to behave ourselves decently in his presence, signifying a consideration and esteem of his person, of his opinion, of his resentment, of his affection toward us: to do any foul or unhandsome thing is a contempt of him, a rudeness toward him, an affront put on him; whereby in effect we do slight, disparage, and reproach him; implying that we do little value his judgment, that we care not for his good-will; that we presume he hath not the sense to discern, or hath not the spirit to dislike, or must have the patience to comport with our unseemly and unsavoury carriage. And if to do other unhandsome things before men is such an indignity offered to them, then it is especially such to commit sin before them, which is the most ugly, the most sordid, the most loathsome behaviour that can be; there is no deformity, no turpitude in nature comparable to sin; nothing so offensive, so distasteful, so abominable to a rational sense; so that the Wise Man's saying is very true, taken any way, *He that despiseth his neighbour, sinneth:* it is both a sin to contemn him, and sinning is an argument of contempt toward him; nor can we better observe St. Peter's injunction, that we *honour all men*, than by forbearing to sin in their presence, out of respect to them. But farther,

Prov. xiv. 21. xi. 12.

1 Pet. ii. 17.

IV. Let us consider, that a good conversation before men is a public benefit, a great advantage to the world and common state of men.

It is not only a good office of charity to this or that man; but it layeth a general obligation on our country, on our age, on posterity itself; upon which a fruitful life, an exemplary virtue may have notable influence.

As notorious sin is a plague to the world, throwing infection and death about it; provoking the wrath of Heaven, and thence deriving vengeance on it; so notable virtue is a general blessing, producing most wholesome and comfortable effects to mankind.

For how can one more oblige the public, than by conferring help to uphold the reputation, and to propagate the entertainment of those things, which are the main

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props of the world, for the sake of which it standeth, and by the means of which it is sustained; than by preserving the virtue and power of conscience, which is the band of all society, the guardian of faith and honesty, the best ensurer of justice, order, and peace in the State, (that which *exalteth a nation*, and *establisheth a kingdom;*) than by producing and promoting those things which certainly will procure the favour and blessing of God on any people? Prov. xiv. 34. xx. 28.

How can a man better deserve of the world, than by concurring to stop the contagion of sin, and the overspreading deluge of iniquity, together with all the lamentable mischiefs consequent on them; than by averting the fierce wrath and severe judgments of God, which a general prevalence of wickedness necessarily will bring down?

Most men pretend to be concerned even for the honour of their country; and how can we better promote that than by checking the progress of *sin*, which will not only be the bane, but *is*, as Solomon telleth us, *the reproach of any people?* Prov. xiv. 34.

It may possibly be, it hath really been, that the conspicuous virtue of a few men (yea sometimes of one single person) hath leavened a country, hath seasoned an age, hath imbued posterity with an admiration of goodness, and with an affection to it. (*One man*, saith St. Chrysostom, *inflamed with zeal may suffice to reform an entire people*[c].) So among the Pagans one person did set up the study of morality, and worthily was styled *the parent of* (the most useful) *philosophy;* whereby he did exceedingly benefit mankind, and did confer much toward preparing men for the reception of our heavenly philosophy. Socrates philosophiæ parens. *Cic.*

Such our Lord designed his Apostles to be; for, *Ye*, saith he, *are the lights of the world, ye are the salt of the earth;* and such in effect they did prove, *God by them*, as St. Paul saith, *manifesting the savour of his knowledge in every place;* they not only by their heavenly doctrine, Matt. v. 13, 14. 2 Cor ii. 14.

[c] Ἀρκεῖ εἷς ἄνθρωπος ζήλῳ πεπυρωμένος ὁλόκληρον διορθώσασθαι δῆμον. *Chrys. ἀνδρ. ά.*

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but chiefly by the lustre and influence of their holy example, converting the world from impious errors and naughty practices unto true religion and virtuous conversation; they did lead men to goodness not only by the ears, but by the eyes, seeing their excellent life, and

Phil. iii. 17. *walking as they had them for ensamples.*

1 Cor. xi. 1. iv. 16. 3 Thess. iii. 7, 9.

It consequently may be, yea hath been, that the singular integrity of one, or of a few persons, displaying itself, hath appeased divine wrath, and hath staved off imminent ruin from a people. So one Noah, publicly main-

2 Pet. ii. 5.

taining and *preaching righteousness*, did preserve the whole race of men from extirpation; so ten persons avowing

Gen. xviii. 32.

righteousness would have kept Sodom from that rueful destruction; so one good man (notably owning God, and interposing for the concerns of piety) might have prevented that calamitous vengeance which fell upon Israel;

Jer. v. 1.

as Jeremy told before, and Ezekiel affirmed after it; *Run ye to and fro*, saith God in Jeremy, *through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh truth, and I will pardon it:*

Ezek. xxii. 30.

and, *I sought for a man*, saith God in Ezekiel, *among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it, but I found none; therefore have I poured mine indignation upon them:* there

Isa. i. 9. 1 Kings xix. 14, 18.

was then *a remnant* of those who closely did serve God; and perhaps *seven thousand* unknown persons, who had not in their hearts deserted religion; but this did not avert God's wrath, or preserve the nation from captivity; as a few openly professing and resolutely practising goodness might have done.

Now who would not be glad of being so public a friend, so general a benefactor, in performing that which doth otherwise so much become him, and so greatly behove him; yielding him the best ornaments and highest advantages even upon his private account? who would not be ambitious both to oblige his country, and to save his own soul together, by a worthy conversation?

Assuredly nothing can be advised more conducible to

the effecting a reformation and amendment of the world, (and consequently to the prosperity and felicity of mankind here,) than a conspiracy of good men in a frank and brisk avowing of goodness in the face of the world. SERM. LXV.

V. A care of our conversation in the sight of men is needful for the preservation of our good name and fair repute among them.

A good name in holy Scripture is represented as a special gift and blessing of God, bestowed in recompense of piety and virtue, and preferred before other most considerable gifts and blessings concerning our external states; for, *By humility*, saith the Wise Man, *and the fear of the Lord, are riches and honour;* both are the rewards of piety; but comparing them, *A good name*, saith he, *is rather to be chosen than great riches:* it cannot, therefore, be a contemptible thing, nor ought it to be neglected by us; for none of God's gifts, no reward which he proposeth, ought to be slighted. 1 Chron. xxix. 12. Eccl. vi. 2. (Eccl. vii. 1.) Prov. xxii. 4. (Ps. cxii. 9.) Prov. xxii. 1.

Reason and experience also do concur in shewing that a good repute is a valuable thing, not only as a fair ornament of our persons, and a commodious instrument of action toward our private welfare, as a guard of our safety and quiet, as serving to procure divers conveniences of life; but as very advantageous, very useful upon moral and spiritual accounts; qualifying us with greater ease and efficacy to serve God, and to do good; for indeed it is manifest, that without it we shall be uncapable of doing God or man any considerable service. Δι' οἰκονομίαν γινόμενον. *Anton.* iv. § 19.

Wherefore, in duty and wisdom we should be careful of preserving this jewel; the which we cannot otherwise do, than by observing this apostolical rule, of *providing things honest in the sight of all men;* for a good conversation is the only guard and convoy of a good name: how can men conceive good opinion of us otherwise than from a view of worthy qualities and good deeds? They may charitably hope, but they cannot confidently judge well of us otherwise than upon good evidence: *Ye shall know them by their fruits*, (that is, by apparent works, falling under human cognizance,) is the rule whereby our Saviour Matt. vii. 16, xii. 33.

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teacheth us to distinguish of men, and to build a right opinion concerning them. Honour is the shadow, the inseparable attendant of conspicuous virtue.

A good conversation will indeed command esteem, and irresistibly extort respect from all men.

Wise and good men heartily will approve it, and gladly will yield it due commendation; they cannot but honour it whenever they see it, as best suiting with their own judgment and with their affection.

Rom. xiv. 18.

Yea it will procure respect even from the worst men; for it is a mistake to think that bad men really do or can despise true goodness: in truth, however they may pretend or make a shew to slight and scorn it, however in words they may flout and revile it, yet in their hearts they cannot but admire and reverence it; although their will may be so perverted as to set them against it, yet their reason cannot be so destroyed (or natural light so quenched in them) as to disapprove it; they do but vilely dissemble, and belie their conscience, when they make as if they did condemn or contemn it: *As*, saith St. Chrysostom, *they who openly do flatter ill livers, do in their mind reprove them; so they who envy the workers of good, in their conscience will admire and approve them*[d]; at least they will do thus in their sober mind; when with any serious application they do reflect on things; when the eye of their soul is anywise cleared from the mists of lust and passion: it is not to be heeded what they say in a fluster or ranting mood, when they are near out of their wits, and have their judgment stifled by sensual imaginations; but what they think when their mind is somewhat composed, and natural light doth shine freely in it.

Indeed such wretches really do most despise those who consort and comply with them in sinful follies: as they cannot in their hearts honour themselves, so they cannot esteem those whom they find like unto them; especially

[d] Οἱ ἐν βασκανίᾳ τοῦτο ποιοῦντες, κατὰ τὸ συνειδὸς ὑμᾶς θαυμάσονται, καὶ ἀποδέξονται· ὥστερ ἂν οἱ φανερῶς κολακεύοντες τοὺς ἐν πονηρίᾳ ζῶντας, κατὰ νοῦν διεξάλλονται. *Chrys. in Matt.* v. 16.

they despise those whom they observe to be so base and silly, as against their own judgment and conscience to fear their displeasure or to regard their censure; looking upon them as vassals to their humour, and renegadoes from their own conscience.

Moreover a good conversation certainly will engage Almighty God to protect our reputation, and to confer honour upon us. For he, as Governor of the world, the Patron of goodness, the Dispenser of proper rewards to all, is in a manner bound to encourage those openly who visibly do own him and take his part, who promote his glory and interest, who pay him due service and obedience, who in regard to his authority do faithfully pursue that which is right and good; he surely will see fit to repay such in the same kind, by openly acknowledging, countenancing, and honouring them: accordingly he hath tied himself to do so by his express word and promise; for, *Them*, saith he, *that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed:* he said it in reference to old Eli, who had neglected the duty of *restraining his sons* from sin; which is a case very much of kin to all neglect of exemplary piety. And, *Whosoever*, saith our Lord, *shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God; but he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God:* the which (one most comfortable, the other most terrible) sentences are to be understood, He that confesseth our Lord not merely by verbal profession, (for divers such who *say, Lord, Lord,* he will not so much as *know* at the final judgment,) but in real practice; he that denieth him, not only by renouncing him with the tongue, but by disobeying him in scandalous conversation, by working iniquity, by the apostasy of bad manners.

1 Sam. ii. 30.

Luke xii. 8.

Matt. vii. 22, 23.

VI. Lastly; The public discharge of a good conscience will yield manifold advantages and great benefits to ourselves; not only as good (and thence needful to our salvation and our comfort) but as public; some of which I shall touch.

Such a practice will much secure and strengthen us in

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goodness; for he that hath the heart with resolution and constancy to do well, notwithstanding any worldly discouragement, although he thereby doth cross the humour of the world, and incurreth the displeasure, envy, hatred, censure, and obloquy of men, he thus having exalted his virtue above the favour and fear of the world, hath set it in a safe place, hath rendered it impregnable.

The consideration of having attained so happy and so worthy a victory over the most dangerous temptations (the
1 John v. 4. victory of faith over the world) will be very comfortable; and the sufferings which (from the disfavour, enmity, and opposition of men) do attend such a practice, being a kind of martyrdom, will yield all the joys and comforts (together with the hopes and rewards) of an heroical patience.

It will afford great satisfaction of mind to reflect on the consequences of such a practice; and to consider that our resolution hath engaged or confirmed others in goodness, hath preserved them from sin, hath withdrawn them from bad courses, and saved them from perdition; that we have been instrumental to the salvation and happiness of any soul; that, beside our own sins, (which are a burden too heavy for any man well to bear,) we have not the sins of others to account for, and shall not be loaded with the guilt of those whom our neglect of duty, our compliance with sin, our stupid coldness and indifference in regard to spiritual affairs, our dissimulation or connivance at the scandalous violation of God's honour and transgression of his laws, might have encouraged in sin; that we are not liable to that re-
Ezek. xliii. 22. proof in the Prophet, *Ye have strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way.*

We shall highly oblige those whom by our good endeavour or example we shall convert to righteousness, or reclaim from iniquity, or shall anywise stop in their career to ruin; who when they shall recover from their error,
2 Tim. ii. 26. and soberly reflect on their case, (when they shall ἀνανήφειν, become again sober, getting out, as it were, of their drunken fit,) will heartily thank us, will bless us, will pray for us, as having laid on them a very great obliga-

tion, and done them the greatest kindness that could be; so that they will be ready to say to us, as David did to Abigail, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from shedding of blood;* this will be the consequence of plain dealing in such cases, and that will be fulfilled which the Wise Man saith, *He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue.*

1 Sam. xxv. 32.

Prov. xxviii. 23. xxvii. 6. xix. 25.

We thereby shall escape the sore complaints and fell curses of those whom our naughty or careless demeanour hath involved in sinful practice; for when their conscience is awakened into a sense of their guilt, when they feel the stings of remorse, when they perceive the extreme damage and woe which they have incurred, then will they discharge their resentments of heart against those who have anywise been accessary to their fall into such a condition; then in their bitterness of soul, in the agony of their sorrow and perplexity, they will be apt to exclaim, Cursed be the day that I knew such an one, or that I did converse with him, who did betray me into this plight, who did inveigle me into temptation, who did not pluck me back from that sinful practice by which I now so deeply suffer; cursed be his base cowardice, his fond modesty, his affected wisdom, his treacherous negligence, his unconscionable indifference, his impious want of zeal for God's honour and charity for my soul, which did keep him from checking me in my bad courses and reclaiming me to my duty by wholesome reproof, by seasonable advice, by exemplary practice before me; it will surely be a great comfort to us, that we have not given occasion for such complaints; but in proportion may say with St. Paul, *I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*

Acts xx. 26.

Ezek. vii. 17. xxxiii 7.

It is also no small advantage to us, that by a good conversation we shall procure the particular friendship and affection of good men; for it is that which discovereth good men to one another, which kindleth their affection toward each other, which draweth them together, and breedeth

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a familiarity between them, and knitteth their hearts together in a holy love; from whence they come to enjoy the faithful advice, the kind assistance, the seasonable consolations, and the hearty prayers each of other; the which great benefits are lost by concealment of ourselves, and reservedness in doing good; for how can any man know him to deserve love, whose goodness is not discernible?

Such considerations may induce all persons, of every rank and condition, to observe this apostolical precept, so far as their capacities do reach; I shall only adjoin, that it especially doth concern persons of quality, in proportion to their eminency in dignity, power, authority, reputation, or any peculiar advantage, whereby the beneficial efficacy of good conversation is increased.

Matt. v. 14. Such persons are like *a city seated on a mountain which cannot be hid;* the height of their station and lustre of their quality do expose them to the observation of all; and their authority doth recommend their practice to the imitation of observers.

Their example cannot fail of having a mighty influence; its light doth guide men, its weight doth sway them; it doth seem to warrant and authorise practice; inferiors would be afraid or ashamed to discost from it.

They have not the temptations which other men have to comply with sin out of fear, out of complaisance, out of design; they being to lead and give law, not to follow or receive it; they being the first movers in conversation; the fashion being regulated by them, or indeed being merely a conformity to their deportment.

Const. Apost. ii. 17. They should by their innocence qualify themselves to reprove others with authority and courage.

They in gratitude to God, who hath bestowed on them such advantages, are obliged to employ them for his service.

Rom. xiii. 3—6. 1 Pet. ii. 14. They particularly were designed and endowed with those advantages, that by them they might countenance, might encourage, might reward, might by all means promote goodness in the world.

They accordingly are responsible for the influence

their conversation hath; so that in the final account most actions of men will lie at their door, so that they shall respectively be either highly rewarded for the virtues and good works, or severely punished for the vices and sins of mankind: the which most weighty consideration I leave by God's grace to be seriously applied by them, who are concerned therein.

SERMON LXVI.

PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN.

2 Cor. viii. 21.

Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

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If we observe the world, we may easily therein discern many persons, who being inwardly well disposed (standing right both in judgment and affection to goodness) are yet loath to appear very good, and hardly will own Christian virtue in the constant discharge of public duties, or in strict abstinence from sinful practices; but commonly (against the dictate of their reason, and sense of their heart) neglect the one, and comply with the other: an odd sort of hypocrites or dissemblers; who studiously conceal their better part, and counterfeit themselves worse than they are; who adore God in their hearts, and address devotions to him in their closets, but scarce will avów him in their visible profession and practice; who have a conscience, but are shy of disclosing it, or letting it take air, and walk in open light, confining it as a criminal to close restraint or obscure retirement; who gladly would be religious and staunch, if there might be no notice taken of it, but take care of being remarkable (or as it were scandalous) for it; who think fit to compromise and compound the business between God and the world, maintaining a neutrality and correspondence with both, so as privately to court the one, and publicly to close with the other.

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Such practice is flatly repugnant to that rule, which otherwhere in precept, and here by his own example, the holy Apostle doth recommend to us; directing us not only *before God*, (that is, in our heart, and in our secret retirements, which God alone doth behold,) but also *before men*, that is, in our external and visible conversation, carefully to perform things good and laudable, eschewing whatever is bad or culpable.

Rom. xiii. 17. Ἐνώπιον ἀνθρώπων.

Our obligation to which rule hath already been confirmed by divers other precepts in holy Scripture, concurring in the injunction of it; and its observance urged by various positive considerations of great weight and force, (declaring how necessary it is for promoting God's honour and glory, how requisite it is for maintaining the dignity of our profession, and advancing the interests of goodness, how charity and justice toward our neighbour do exact it from us, how conducible it is to the public benefit of mankind, and how advantageous in many respects to our own particular welfare;) and not insisting farther upon those considerations, I shall now only enforce it by scanning the common principles, grounds, motives, pretences or excuses of the contrary practice, which I before touched, of openly deserting virtue, or declining the performance of duty before men; and by shewing how very foolish and vain, how very naughty and base, how very mischievous, dangerous, and pernicious they are.

They chiefly are those which I shall immediately touch and reflect upon.

1. Men commonly in their visible conversation do neglect their duty, or comply with sin out of modesty; because they are ashamed of doing that which may expose them to some disgrace or censure; because virtuous practice may raise distaste in the company, and provoke the scorn of those with whom they converse: because such a point of duty is out of request, and slighted in the world; they are *afraid of men's faces;* their tender forehead cannot sustain derision, or endure to be flouted for being out of the mode, and wearing an uncouth garb of conscience.

Jer. i. 8.

But this plainly is a perverse and unmanly modesty; a

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fond, a vile, a shameful shame: fie on it! should any man be ashamed of that, which is his chief beauty, his best ornament, his sole dignity and glory? should a man be ashamed of being evidently wise in his conduct, of following his reason, of consulting his true interest, of pursuing his own certain welfare and felicity? is it fit that any man should be ashamed of paying due acknowledgment, of yielding due reverence, of rendering due gratitude, of performing due service to his Creator, sovereign Lord, and great Benefactor; to whom he oweth all, upon whose will he entirely dependeth, at whose absolute disposal he is? Surely these are no shameful things, but such rather wherein we ought to have the greatest confidence, which we ought to perform with the greatest assurance.

If we are bashful, let us be so in regard to things which are truly shameful; let us be ashamed of sin, that is, of our most real deformity, our turpitude, our disgrace, our wretchedness; the which, indeed, is the only dishonourable and despicable thing; the which did first produce shame, and did introduce it into the world, (for while innocence did abide, there was no shame,) and the which will ever carry shame along as its inseparable adherent: it would indeed become us to blush at our horrible unworthiness and detestable ingratitude toward our bountiful Lord, and most gracious Redeemer; it were proper for us to be confounded at our extreme folly and foul treachery toward ourselves, in betraying our souls to guilt, to regret, to wrath and punishment: who should be ashamed, who not, the holy Psalmist hath well taught us, *Let none that wait on thee be ashamed; let them be ashamed which transgress without cause:* and, *Let the proud be ashamed*—but *let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed.*

Gen. iii. 2. ii. 25.

Ps. xxv. 3. Ps. cxix. 78—80.

It is true modesty to be ashamed of doing unworthy and unhandsome things; but to be ashamed of doing what reason and duty require, is pitiful weakness of mind.

We do not owe so much regard to vicious and vain persons, as to be dashed out of countenance by them; we should rather by our masculine resolution and upright confidence put them to confusion.

Tit. ii. 8.

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If shame be an evil which we would avoid, the only remedy thereof we may learn from those words of the Psalmist, *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to thy testimonies:* but it is a fond course to shun disgrace by doing that which alone deserveth it. Psal. cxix. 6.

Is it not also a wild thing to seem modest toward men, while we are really so bold with God, as presumptuously to offend him, to affront him, *to provoke him* (as those in the Prophet did) *to his face?* for so indeed every sinner doth; and as it is the greatest inadvertency not to consider God alway present with us, so it is the height of impudence to sin in his presence, or to prefer a regard to men before the reverence due to his eye [a]. Is. lxv. 3. Jer vi. 17. viii. 12.

Is it not also great folly for declining a little present transient disgrace, to do that whereof afterward we shall be grievously and perpetually ashamed; which we shall never remember or reflect upon without confusion, (according to that of the Apostle, *What fruit had ye of those things whereof ye are now ashamed?*) the consequence whereof is our standing obnoxious to *shame and everlasting contempt.* Wisd. iv. 20. (Jer. xxii. 22.) Rom. vi. 21. Dan. xii. 2.

If we be thus ashamed of God, and of our duty to him, may he not justly in recompense be ashamed of us, and disdain to own us in favour and mercy? He will surely, he hath often declared so; *Whosoever*, saith our Lord, *shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.* Luke ix. 26. xii. 9. 2 Tim. ii. 12.

2. Another principle, near of kin to the former, disposing men to commit sin, or wave duty in their open conversation, is fear of losing the good-will, or getting the ill-will of men.

It must often happen, that whoever will be virtuous, and stick to his duty, will forfeit the favour of men, will incur their displeasure, will provoke their indignation; by crossing their humour and conceit, by implicitly slighting their opinion and condemning their practice; this is the portion

[a] Quid quæso rationis habet, verecundari ad diem hominis, et vultum Dei non vereri. *Bern. Ep.* 108.

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and fate of strict and stiff piety; the friendship of God and the world are not well consistent; and St. Paul's rule may be converted, *If I should please men, I should not be the servant of Christ:* hence men prizing the favour of men with the advantages of it, and dreading their anger, hatred, disdain, with the mischiefs consequent on them, are scared from their duty.

Jam. iv. 4. 1 John ii. 15. Gal. i. 10.

But in truth this is a silly, a base, a sorry fear, arguing wretched meanness of spirit, and pitiful cowardice. For,

Dost thou, fond wretch, fear to lose the favour of man, whose favour doth avail nothing to thy main interests, and cannot anywise considerably benefit thee, (for in no respect dost thou depend on his will and providence,) but dost not fear being deprived of God's favour, upon which all thy good hangeth, wherein thy felicity consisteth, without which thou art uncapable of any prosperity, of any security, of any joy or comfort?

Dost thou fear the displeasure of man, of poor impotent man, a sorry frail *worm*, whose *breath is in his nostrils*, (ready to fly away in every moment,) whose anger can do thee no real harm, whose power can hardly touch thee, can nowise reach thy soul or its concerns; whilst thou dreadest not to offend the eternal almighty God, under whose feet thou liest, ready to be crushed into nothing, or stamped down into hell at his pleasure?

Job xxv. 6. Is. ii. 22. Matt. ix. 28.

Darest thou not, O heartless dastard, to do that which is in thy power easily to do, which thou art infinitely concerned to do, which upon so many accounts thou art obliged to do, out of fear to cross thine equal, yea far thine inferior in this case; for he that standeth to his duty, as he hath the better cause, so he hath the greater force, and assuredly will defeat all his opposers?

Art thou, O pusillanimous slave, in regard to any creature, thy fellow-subject and servant, afraid of expressing thy loyalty to thy sovereign Lord, thy love to infinite goodness, thy gratitude to thy best friend and kindest benefactor, thy reverence toward the divine majesty, thine awe of uncontrollable power? is this a reasonable, an excusable, a tolerable fear?

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Surely if ever to be driven out of heart is reproachful, if ever to be cowed doth argue infirmity and abjectness of spirit, it is in this case; when we have all the reason and obligation in the world to be most courageous and resolute, to fear no colours, to make our party good against all opposition; when we have the greatest necessity to engage us, and the greatest advantage to encourage us to hold out stoutly; the greatest necessity, seeing all that we have, our life, our salvation, our eternal weal doth lie at stake; *for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life:* the greatest advantage, for that if we will, we are invincible, and assured of an easy victory, seeing we take part with God, and have Omnipotency on our side; so that we can say with David, *The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do unto me: The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?*

Deut. xxxii. 47. Ps. cxviii. 6. Heb. xiii. 6. Psal. lvi. 11. xi. 4. xxvii. 1, 3. xlvi. 2.

There is not indeed, to those who are under God's special protection, and confide in him, any thing in nature really formidable or terrible: it is his peculiar attribute to be the mighty and terrible One; he recommendeth himself to us as *our fear*, that is, the special object of it; we, therefore do sacrilegiously wrong him, by fearing any other thing in such cases of competition, and when we are concerned to fear him; whence then we are prohibited to fear the greatest powers in the world; *Fear not them which kill the body*, (if God permit them,) *but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.*

Jer. i. 8. xx. 11. Isa. xli. 10. Gen. xxvi. 24. xv. 1. Num. xiv. 9. Deut. xxxi. 8. 2 Chron. xx. 17. Jer. v. 22. x. 7. Rev. xv. 4. Deut. vii. 21. x. 17. xxviii. 58. Ps. lxxvi. 7, 11. xcix. 3. Is. viii. 12.

Who, saith St. Peter, *is he that will* (or that can) *harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?*—wherefore *be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts*, (by a pure confidence in him.)

xli. 10. Matt. x. 26, 28. Τίς ὁ κακώσων; 1 Pet. iii, 13, 14.

In such cases, we should be ready to accost the greatest potentates in terms like those of the three brave youths in Daniel: *O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will*

Dan. iii. 16, 17, 18.

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While wicked profane men are so bold and stout in impugning goodness, we should be courageous in defence of it. *The righteous is as bold as a lion.*

Prov. xxviii. 1.

The fear of God (the which is most reasonable and prudent, and consistent with the bravest courage) should exclude the fear of men; the which is no less vain than base; the which indeed doth involve the wildest boldness, and most rash fool-hardiness in the world, pushing us into the most desperate adventures that can be; while by sinning we incense the most dreadful anger, we invade the most formidable power, we incur the most horrible dangers, we run headlong into the jaws of death and hell: such a mixture there is of base cowardice and mad audacity in practices issuing from that principle.

3. Men commonly do neglect the open practice of virtue out of care to decline envy; for ill men seeing others endowed with worthy qualities, which they want; performing good deeds, from which their infirmity or pravity doth hold them averse; entitled to commendations, rewards, and advantages to which they cannot aspire, and whereby they seem to eclipse their credit, or impair their interest, or expose their unworthiness; cannot look on such persons without an *evil eye*, or without conceiving in their heart malevolent grudges at them, which they will be apt to vent in spiteful practices, endeavouring to supplant or blast their virtue; men are apt to envy the favourites of God, as they are of princes. Nor indeed doth any thing more powerfully incite men to hurt their neighbour than such malignity, being edged by that anguish which their sore eye doth feel; to shun which envy, and its mischiev-

Invidiam placare paras virtute relicta? Contemnere miser. Hor. Serm. ii. 3.

ous effects, men commonly are tempted to withdraw its cause, their own virtue, that its bright lustre may not wound the sight of such neighbours.

But thus to appease envy in deserting virtue is very fond and absurd. For,

Shall I cast away my best goods, because another would not have me to enjoy them? shall I be terribly sick, to cure another's distempered fancy? shall I render myself miserable, because another doth not like to see me happy? because he doth want charity, must I forego innocence? because he doth not love me, shall I hate myself? to please him merely, without bettering him, to ease him of a wholesome smart, shall I displease God and abuse myself?

Would he not be a silly man, who being envied because he seemeth a favourite of his prince, would, to gratify such enviers, offend his prince? No surely, this is too fond a regard unto any man's base disposition, this is too great a gratification of an enemy's pleasure, this is too slavish a depression of a man's self; rather let him fret, let him torment himself, let him inflict a just punishment on his own uncharitable and unworthy humour; whereby perhaps he may be reduced to discern his folly and correct his fault.

Would any man upon such terms part with his estate, mar his business, slur his reputation, or purposely play the fool? would any man become poor, infamous, or contemptible, because to be rich, to be prosperous, to be honourable, to be wise, are invidious things? Much less should a man upon that account neglect his duty, thereby betraying his soul, discarding the love and favour of God, destroying the satisfaction of his conscience, and forfeiting his hopes of felicity: damages and mischiefs comparable to which all the envy and spite in the world can nowise bring upon him.

If we would avoid envy, we should not do it by incurring a worse evil, and rendering ourselves contemptible for unworthiness; we should rather damp it by modesty, humility, an inoffensive tenour of life.

We should surmont it, and quash it by constant blame-

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less conversation: the which will kill the envious or the envy.

An unquestionable virtue will stop the mouth of detraction, and drive envy into corners, not daring to shew itself against it.

4. A common principle, from whence neglect of duty and commission of sin in visible conversation doth spring, is a fear of infamy and reproach, whereto the strict practice of virtue is liable; men not enduring to bear the odious censures, the foul imputations, the ugly characters, the scurvy epithets, and opprobrious names, wherewith the bold and spiteful enemies of goodness are wont to asperse and brand its faithful adherents.

To be deemed weak, credulous, superstitious, formal, timorous, nice, squeamish, scrupulous, strait-laced, conceited, affected, cross, surly, morose, froward, stubborn, pertinacious, proud.

To be termed a foppish simpleton, doting on speculations and enslaved to rules; a fantastical humourist, a precise bigot, a rigid stoic, a demure sneaksby, a clownish singularist, or nonconformist to ordinary usage, a stiff opiniatre; a man of a pitiful narrow spirit, pent up within a small compass, confined by principles, fettered by laws, living in bondage to his conscience.

These and the like harsh censures, foul reproaches, and abusive scoffs, even all which invention quickened by envy, choler, rancorous spite, and aided by the malicious fiend, can suggest, wherewith the profane crew of men usually do conspire to daub and persecute those who refuse to comply with their unconscionable extravagances and impieties, men can hardly brook; and thence to shun them yield up all, cross their reason, prostitute their conscience, violate all their obligations; choosing rather to be justly reproachable for bad actions, than unjustly reproached for good.

Psal. lvii. 3, 4.

But with such a person, who is thus diverted from his duty, let me expostulate.

Dost thou well to regard what unbridled tongues out of a wanton mind and corrupt heart do sputter and foam?

Shall thy practice depend on their loose wit or licentious talk, so that thou must do nothing which they shall not be in humour to commend[b]?

Wilt thou renounce all wisdom, abandon thy best interest, forfeit thy happiness, to decline a squib or a flurt[c]?

Would not he be a stark fool, who would be railed or jeered out of his way in travel, out of his business in traffic, out of his estate or real interest upon any occasion? and is he not evidently far more such, who will be flouted out of his duty, out of his salvation, out of any spiritual advantage? Was not the practice of David more advisable, who said, *The proud have had me in derision; yet have I not declined from thy law?* Psal. cxix. 51.

David, a great king, a man of singular courage and gallantry, a glorious hero; yet even him did bold and base people deride. Whom will not profane impudence assail? whom will not they attempt to deter from goodness?

Art thou so blind as not to discern whence it cometh that they disparage virtue? that is, from their extreme vanity and rashness, which move them to speak any thing without consideration or discretion; from their great naughtiness and weakness, their being bewitched with pleasure and besotted with vice, which engageth them to take part so furiously with them; from their malignity and spite against that which crosseth their fond humours and exorbitant lusts; from their pride, which swelleth against those who by contrary practice dissent from their folly, and reprove their wickedness, and eclipse their repute; from their envy, which repineth at thy appearing better and happier than themselves, thy excelling them in true worth, thy enjoying that satisfaction which they want, thy attaining that blessed hope to which they cannot aspire; and seeing that their reproaches do issue from such principles, wilt thou regard them?

Are their words any slander, who being professed ene-

[b] Nihil est turpius, quam sapientis vitam ab insipientium sermone pendere. *Cic. de Fin.* ii.

[c] Quid de te alii loquantur, ipsi videant. *Scipio apud Cic. in Somn.*

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mies of goodnesss do naturally impugn it by the readiest arms they have, a virulent and petulant tongue [d]?

Can their dirty language, bespattering good things, alter their nature, or render that dishonourable and odious, which in itself is most excellent, most amiable, most venerable, most useful and profitable [e]?

Is it not indeed a commendation of virtue which should encourage us the more to like it, to honour it, to embrace it, that vain, wild, dissolute persons, distempered in their minds, notoriously void of discretion, of integrity, of sobriety, do pretend to vilify and disgrace it [f]?

Ἄφρονες. 1 Pet. ii. 15. Ἄτοποι. 2 Thess. iii. 2. Ant. iii. §. 4.

As their commendation is of no worth, so their reproach is less considerable.

Dost thou not disparage thine own judgment by heeding theirs, or suffering it to be of any consideration with thee in the conduct of thy life [g]?

Dost thou take them to be serious in this, or to speak in good earnest, when they reproach virtue, and slight the plain dictates of reason, the clear light of natural conscience, the express commands of God, the apparent concerns of their own soul? they who are sober in nothing, how can they be serious in this, why should they seem judicious in such a case [h]?

Is it not evidently better to be slandered by giddy, lewd, ungodly wretches, who mind not what they say, nor care what they do, whose judgment therefore can signify nothing; than really to deserve reproof, and thence certainly to incur blame, from all staid, sober, considerate, wise, and virtuous persons, who judge advisedly and uprightly about things [i]?

[d] Οὐδεὶς φαῦλος τοὺς σπουδαίους ἐπαινεῖν ὑπομένει. *Isid. Pelus. Ep.* ii. 220.

[e] (Οὐ γὰρ δοκεῖν ἄριστος, ἀλλ' εἶναι θέλω. Τὸ δοκεῖν ἁδὲν πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὥσπερ οὐδὲ ἕναρ ἀλλότριον. *Greg. Naz. Orat.—de sede Const.*) *Ant.* viii. §. 1.

[f] Malis displicere, laudari est. *Sen. Excerpt.*

Non potest bonus non esse, qui bonis placet; nec minus validum argumentum mihi videtur, quod bonus sit si malis displiceat. *Bern. Ep.* 248.

[g] Quanta dementia est vereri ne infameris ab infamibus? *Sen. Ep.* 91.

[h] Moverer si judicio hoc facerent, nunc morbo faciunt. *Sen. Exc.*

[i] Ego cum a nostro Catone laudabar, vel reprehendi me a cæteris facile patiebar. *Cic. de Orat.*

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Is it not better to undergo their severest censure and most biting scoffs, than to be condemned of folly and baseness by thy own mind, and reviled by thy own conscience?

Is it not infinitely better to be unjustly defamed by men, than to be disreputed by God, exposed to most disgraceful condemnation at his bar, and thrown into that state of everlasting ignominy? Dan. xii. 2.

Is it not more tolerable to hear such language, than, having violated our duty and broken God's commands, one day to hear that dismal sentence, *Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire* [k]? Matt. xxv. 41.

It is a glorious infamy which one sustaineth for the sake of righteousness [l].

Even heathens, with whom glory was the most ample reward and sweetest fruit of virtue, yet do enjoin that we should prefer conscience before it; and that we should rather gladly embrace infamy than forsake virtue [m]. Ant. v. §. 3. xi. 16. ix. 18.

It is the lot of all good men (for probation, exercise, and improvement of their virtue) to be persecuted, at least in some times, as when St. Paul said, *All that will live godlily in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution:* and surely he that sincerely loveth God would even desire occasion of suffering somewhat for his sake, in testimony of his faithful affection; but what more tolerable persecution, what more easy martyrdom could we wish, than to be lashed by a scurrilous tongue; or rather to observe the ears of others to be infested with the buzzes of detraction? what is this but a little air stirred in vain, but a mere sound or blast of wind, importing nought to him that doth not mind it, or will not be affected with it? the which surely to a sound heart and pure conscience cannot be very sensible; a man must have a froward temper, or a tender ear, whom a little such creaking or grating noise doth much 2 Tim. iii. 12. Acts xiv. 22. Heb. xii. 6. Quid stultius homine verba metuente? *Sen. Ep.* 91.

[k] Tu ergo plus opprobria times quam tormenta? &c. *Bern. Ep.* 108.

[l] Æquissimo animo ad honestum consilium per mediam infamiam tendam, &c. *Sen. Ep.* 81.

[m] Non vis esse justus sine gloria? at mehercle sæpe justus esse debebis cum infamia. *Sen. Ep.* 113.

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vex; all its force is broken, all its mischief is remedied easily, by neglect or contempt.

It is in a manner more commendable to suffer for being good, than for being a Christian; a truer martyrdom to suffer for the temper, than for the name of Christ; for doing well, than for professing truth.

Who indeed had ever been good, in any notable degree, if some had minded the opinion or the discourse of such men, whom in all times the great adversary of goodness and maligner of our welfare hath excited to deter men from virtue by thus abusing it? hath it not ever been the portion of good men to suffer in this kind[n]?

Was not our Lord himself, were not his apostles, were not all the prophets of old, were not all the heroes in goodness of all times thus pursued with obloquy? what vile imputation, what name of reproach can be devised, wherewith the spiteful world did not besmear them[o]?

Ονειδισμοῖς τε θλίψεσι θεατριζόμενοι. Heb. x. 33.

Yet were they much disturbed at it? were they anywise discouraged or scared by it from their duty? No; they rather did find satisfaction and delight in it; it rather did heighten their mind and strengthen their resolution; it begat a gallant and triumphant disdain of such injuries, enlivening and animating them in their career of duty; they did embrace reproach for righteousness not only with content, as their proper lot and portion from God's providence, but with joy, as their special glory and happiness from divine goodness; feeling it most true what our Master taught: *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Blessed are ye, when men—shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.* And, according to St. Peter, εἰ ὀνειδίζεσθε, *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ*, (that is for conscionably discharging any Christian duty,) *happy are ye; for the spirit of glory*

Acts v. 41. 2 Cor. xii. 10. Εὐδοκῶ ἐν ὕβρεσιν— Matt. v. 11. Luke vi. 22.

1 Pet. iv. 14.

[n] Jer. xx. 7. Psal xliv. 16, 17. lvii. 3, 4. cxix. 51, lxix. 10. Job xii. 4. Wisd. v. 3.

[o] Ἐμπαιγμῶν καὶ μαστίγων πεῖραν ἔλαβεν. Heb. xi. 36. Heb. xii. 3. Ἀναλογίσασθαι. 2 Cor. vi. 8. Διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀτιμίας.

and of God resteth on you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but in your part he is glorified. SERM. LXVI.

In fine, it is all reason, and it is the express command of God, that in such cases we should not regard the censures or the reproaches of any mortal; it is a part of duty to despise obloquy, to expose and lose reputation for God's sake. For, *Hearken*, saith he, *unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law: fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation from generation to generation.* Is. li. 7,8.

5. Men commonly decline the public practice of duty out of affectation thereby to be deemed more honest and sincere, or to decline the suspicion of being hypocritical.

As this is the most obvious and usual calumny wherewith dissolute people do charge good men; so to men of generous disposition it is of all censures most poignant, as most crossing their temper; according to which as they hate to be, so they can hardly endure to be counted or called dissemblers; whence often they choose rather to seem indifferent to goodness, than zealously affected to it; they rather wave some points of duty, than, for the performance of them, expose themselves to that imputation.

But this proceeding is very unreasonable. For,

What can be more absurd than to be really and notoriously bad, (as whoever omitteth his duty is,) to prevent a surmise of being such? or to be truly worse than we should be, that we may not be deemed worse than we seem?

How can we more gratify the enemy of our salvation, than by approving ourselves in truth to be what he would falsely challenge us to be, mockers of God, and traitors to our own soul?

Is it not a vain thing to regard that kind of censure which it is impossible for any man to escape, upon other terms than of being very naughty? for wicked men will never fail to load those with this charge, who will not comply with their follies, and *run with them to the same excess of* 1 Pet. iv. 4.

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riot, or are anywise better than themselves; it is inevitable for a staunch man not to be stigmatized for a hypocrite by them.

2 Cor. i. 12. 1 John iii. 21.

We have certainly more reason to be satisfied with the sure conscience and sense of our own integrity, than to be moved with the presumptuous assertions of any wretch devoid of justice or charity: his censure, being plainly injurious and contrary to all rules of equity, which prescribe that no man should judge of things unknown or uncertain, is utterly despicable.

1 John iii. 20. 1 Thess. ii. 4. Gal. i. 10. Col. iii. 23. Eph. vi. 5. 1 Cor. iv. 4. Ps. xxxvii. 5, 6.

The testimony of God, (*who is greater than our hearts*,) perfectly knowing our sincerity, may abundantly support us; it is a great wrong to him for us to value the rash suspicions of men, when we are secure of his knowledge, who *seeth all our works*, and *trieth our hearts*; who hath said, that *if we commit our way to him*, and *trust in him, he will bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noonday.*

It is certainly better to be called hypocrite by men for doing our duty, than to be treated as a hypocrite by God for neglecting it; for all those who upon any account do violate God's laws, shall *have their portion with the hypocrites* in that disconsolate place, *where is weeping and gnashing of teeth.* And good reason; for indeed by thus avoiding hypocrisy, we really do incur it; by seeking to preserve an opinion of sincerity, we forfeit the reality of it; by the practice of disavowing the fear of God and care of goodness, we do constitute ourselves certain hypocrites and impostors; dissembling our thoughts, smothering our conscience, deluding our neighbours with false conceits of us, feigning that indifference which we have not, pretending to act without regret or remorse, which we cannot do; seeming otherwise than we are, signifying otherwise than we mean, doing otherwise than we judge fit, or like to do; that is, if we be not stark infidels, or utterly void of conscience.

Matt. xxiv. 51.

This is hypocrisy turned the wrong side outward, disguising a man in a fouler shape, and uglier garb, than that which is natural and true.

And if we compare the two hypocrisies, (that of pretending conscience which we want, and this of denying conscience which we have; that of seeming better than we are, this of seeming worse than we may be,) this in nature may well seem more vile, in tendency more dangerous, in effect more mischievous than the other.

There is in both the same falsehood, the same prevarication, the like contempt and abuse of God; but the hypocrite of whom we speak doeth worse things, more directly wrongful to God, more prejudicial to goodness, more harmful to the world.

The specious hypocrite, counterfeiting goodness, and *having a form of godliness without the power* and reality *of it*, doth yield to God some part (the exterior part) of his due honour and respect; but the sneaking hypocrite, disowning goodness, doth apparently desert, slight, and affront God: the one serveth God with his face and his voice, though *his heart be far from him;* the other doth not so much as sacrifice a carcase of obedience to him: that may bring some credit and advantage to goodness, strengthen its interest by his vote and countenance: this by not avowing it doth assuredly weaken its reputation and cause: that hypocrisy, as such, is a private and single evil, whereby a man doth indeed prejudice himself, but doth not injure his neighbour, yea, may edify him by the appearing (which in this respect is the same with the real) goodness of his example; but this hypocrisy is a general mischief, a scandalous evil, a contagious pestilence, whereby a man not only harmeth himself, but wrongeth many others, seducing them into dissoluteness, infecting the world with base indifference to good, and easiness to comply with sin.

It is indeed a sad thing, that God and goodness should be deserted upon this account; that most men should be so uncharitable, so unjust, so imprudent, as to suspect all good men of hypocrisy; as if it were incredible that any man should heartily love or fear God, (when it is rather strange that any man should do otherwise;) that any man in good earnest, or otherwise than in pretence and for

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sinister respects, should embrace virtue, (when it is marvellous that a reasonable man should decline it;) that so many, of themselves inclinable to goodness, should be so weak as to be deterred from it by so vain an apprehension; and that the name of hypocrisy should drive away piety; that it should become desirable, that hypocrites might abound in the world, lest religion both in truth and shew should be discarded.

In fine, we may otherwise suppress this odious imputation than by deserting goodness; we may demonstrate ourselves serious and sincere by an inflexible adherence to it in the continual tenor of our practice; and especially in some instances of duty, which are hardly consistent with hypocrisy: for no man can hold long in a strained posture; no man will take much pains, or encounter great difficulties, or sustain grievous hardships and afflictions, cross his appetites, forego gains and honours, for that which he doth not heartily like and love: he may counterfeit in ceremonies and formalities, but he will hardly feign humility, meekness, patience, contentedness, temperance, at least uniformly and constantly. Even the patient enduring this censure will confute it, and wipe off the aspersion of hypocrisy.

Matt. xxiii. 23

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PROVIDE THINGS HONEST IN THE SIGHT OF ALL MEN.

2 Cor. viii. 21.

Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

6. Another great impediment of good conversation before men is a desire of seeming courteous and civil. Men usually conform to sinful practices, because they would not be held clowns, rude and distasteful in conversation; they would not give offence to their company, by clashing with their humour; by preferring their own judgment, and seeming to be in their own conceit wiser and better than those with whom they converse; by provoking them to think they are held fools or worse, by such non-compliance.

This is an ordinary snare to easy and ingenuous natures; but the ground of it is very unreasonable: for although in matters of indifference, where duty and sin do not fall into consideration, to be limber and ductile as can be, (which is the temper of the best metal,) to have no humour of our own, or to resign up all our humour to the will of our company, to condescend unto, and comport with any thing; to raise no faction or debate, but presently to yield to the swaying vote; to *become all things to all men* in a ready complaisance, be wisdom and good manners, doth argue good nature, good understanding, good breeding; is a rightly gentle and obliging quality:

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Yet where duty is concerned, where sinning or not sinning is the case, there courtesy hath no room; there it is vain to pretend any engagement to complaisance.

For surely it is better to be held uncivil, than to be ungodly; it is far better manners to offend any number of men, than to be rude with God, to clash with his pleasure, to offer indignity and injury to him: there can be no competition in the case; no shadow of reason, why we should displease God to please men.

As it were more civil to offend ten thousand boors (peasants) than to affront our king; so to offend ten thousand kings than to affront our God were in policy more advisable, and in equity more justifiable: so the royal Psalmist did judge; for, *Princes*, said he, *did sit and speak against me, but thy servant did meditate in thy statutes:* so Moses, so Samuel, so Elias, so Jeremy, so Daniel, so the three noble children, so the holy Apostles did conceive; who being persons otherwise very courteous and gentle, yet had not that consideration of mighty princes, as not rather to approve their consciences to God, than to comply with their pleasure; how much less should we, upon pretence of courtesy toward inferior persons in ordinary conversation, transgress our duty?

Psal. cxix. 23. Matt. x. 18.

Our own interest in such cases is too considerable to be sacrificed to the conceit or pleasure of any men: our salvation is no matter, wherein formality of respect should intervene, or have any weight; to gain or forfeit our eternal happiness is no business of compliment or ceremony: it were a silly courtesy for a man to wait on his company to hell, a wild point of gallantry to be damned in complaisance.

Who would take himself to be obliged in good manners to hold on the round in a cup of poison; to leap down after those, who, from blind inadvertency, or wilful perverseness, tumble into a gulf, to gash or stab himself in conformity to some desperate folk? Much less can a man be engaged out of any such regard (in compliance with the mistake, weakness, or pravity of others) to incur guilt, to provoke divine wrath, to expose his soul to utter ruin,

to undergo a damage, for which all the world cannot make any reparation or amends?

Is it not far better to disgust than to gratify those, who have so little consideration of our welfare; who indeed are very discourteous and heinously rude in offering to tempt us unto sin, to desire a compliance therein with them; to expect from us, that we should adventure so much for their vain satisfaction?

Indeed to gratify such persons were great and noble courtesy: but really to do it, we should not go this way; for this is a spurious courtesy, rather conspiracy and treachery, than courtesy.

It is in truth, at the bottom, great discourtesy (involving much unkindness, real abuse, unmerciful inhumanity and cruelty) to second, to countenance, to support or encourage any man in doing that which manifestly tendeth unto his great prejudice, to his utter bane.

It is the truest civility (implying real humanity, genuine charity, faithful kindness, and tender pity) to stand off in such cases, and, by refusing (in a modest, gentle, discreet manner refusing) to concur in sin with our friends and companions, to check them, to warn them, to endeavour their amendment and retreat from pernicious courses; to exercise that *compassion* toward them, which St. Jude calleth *pulling them out of the fire.* Jud. 22, 23.

In such cases to repel them, yea to reprove them, is the greatest favour we can shew them; it is not only safe for ourselves, but kind to them to observe St. Paul's precept, *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them;* for which deportment, whenever they come to themselves, and soberly reflect on things, they will thank and bless us; and it will happen as the Wise Man saith, *He that rebuketh a man, afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with his tongue.* Eph. v. 11. Prov. xxviii. 23.

In fine, if we throughly scan the business, we shall find that commonly it is not abundance of courtesy, but a defect of charity, or of conscience, or of courage, which dis-

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poseth us to reservedness, or to concurrence upon such occasions, in regard to unallowable practices.

7. Another snare which catcheth and holdeth us in open practice of sin, or neglect of duty, is deference to the opinion, authority, custom, or example of others; to the common opinion, to the authority of great and leading persons, to the fashion of the world, and prevalent humour of the age.

A man (not consulting or not confiding in his own reason) is apt to credit the vogue, to defer a kind of veneration to the general sentiments of men, (especially of men qualified,) apprehending that allowable or tolerable, which men commonly by their practice seem to approve. He is prone to suspect his own judgment of mistake, when it doth thwart the opinion of so many; and hardly can have the heart to oppose his single apprehension against so common notions.

—illos Defendit numerus— *Juv. Sat.* ii. 45.

The commonness of sin, and multitude of offenders, doth in a manner authorize and warrant it, doth at least seem to excuse and extenuate it.

Ecclus. xvi. 17.

A man easily conceiteth himself safe enough, while he is in the herd, while he walketh in the road, when he hath the broad coverlet of general usage to shroud him from blame: he doth at least fancy consolation in undergoing a doom with so many.

But upon many accounts, this is a very fallacious and dangerous ground of practice.

Ant. ix. 18. xi. 3, 4.

For multitudes are no good authors of opinion, or guides of practice.

Argumentum pessimi turba. *Sen. de Vit.* b. 2.

Wise men have ever been apt to suspect that to be bad, which is most commonly admired and affected.

Nothing is more vulgarly noted, than the injudiciousness, the blindness, the levity, temerity, and giddiness of the vulgar; temper, inclination, appetite, interest, and the like perverting biases, have most sway on them; any specious appearance, any slight motive, any light rumour doth serve to persuade them any thing, to drive them any whither.

All ages have deplored the paucity of wise and good men; the genuine disciples of our Lord, and *sons of wisdom* have ever been *pusillus grex*, *a small flock*; our Lord

hath told us, that *Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.*

Matt. vii. 13. Luke xiii. 24. Rom. ix 27. Is. x. 22.

Wherefore popular use is no good argument of truth or right; nor can yield any warrant or any colour for infringing God's law: no *plebiscitum* can be of force against it.

God never did allow the people to exempt themselves or us from their loyalty, or obedience to his laws; they are universally obligatory; he hath *commanded all men to repent;* he hath threatened that otherwise *all shall perish;* and that *tribulation and anguish* shall be *upon every soul of man that doeth evil.*

Acts xvii. 30. Luke xiii. 3. Rom. ix. 12. Rom. ii. 9.

He by express prohibitions hath obviated all such pretences and pleas; *Thou shalt not*, saith he, *follow a multitude to do evil;* and, *Say ye not a confederacy—neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid*, (fear not to dissent and discost *from the way of this people.*) And, *If sinners entice thee*, (how many soever they be, though it be *a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers,*) *consent thou not.*

Exod. xxiii. 2. Rom. xii. 2. Be not conformed to this world. Is. viii. 11. 1 John ii. 15. Love not the world.

Indeed if we consider it, it is so far from excusing sin, that it is an aggravation thereof, that we therein conspire with others, and the more the worse: to oppose God singly is not quite so criminal, as to join with a rout in hostility and rebellion against him; for hereby God's authority is more shaken, and his honour more rudely violated; hereby we do not only sin ourselves, but contribute to the sin of others, encourage them to it, and uphold them in it by our patronage.

Is. viii. 10. Prov. i. 10. Isa. i. 4.

Hereby we become accessary to the degeneracy and general apostasy of the age.

Hereby we do join our forces to pull down God's judgments on our country, and by promoting general corruption induce general vengeance.

The multitude of sinners is so far from sheltering any one from wrath, that it surely draweth it upon all; forcing the Almighty, not only for the assertion of his own authority, and vindication of his honour, but for the good

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of the people, and *purgation* of the world, to pour forth remarkable vengeance.

Isa. i. 25. I will purge away the dross.

For example; in the time of Noah did God *spare the old world*, when *all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth*, did that stave off God's wrath, or stop the deluge? No, it did grievously provoke him, it did in a manner necessitate him to *destroy man from the face of the earth; bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.*

Gen. vi. 12. 2 Pet. ii. 5. Gen. vi. 7. 2 Pet. ii. 5.

Did the number of sinners in Sodom prevent vengeance on them? was it not that which did *condemn them to an overthrow* so dismal, pulling down fire and brimstone on them?

2 Pet. ii. 6.

What was the reason of that woful captivity, into which Israel was carried? was it not because they *were all grievous revolters;* and had so generally conspired in wickedness, that the Prophet could say, *Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it?* Was it not this which did wring from God that sentence, *Shall I not visit for these things? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*

Jer. vi. 28. Jer. v. 1. Jer. v. 29.

When the case is such in any community, as it was in Israel, when God said, *From the sole of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it*, then judgment is necessary, and it must assuredly follow, *Your country is desolate*—then God, his patience being tired, and his goodness unsupportably abused, will cry out, *Ah, I will ease me of my adversaries and avenge me of mine enemies.*

Isa. i. 6. Isa. i. 7. Isa. i. 24.

God, as Governor of the world, in discharge of his office, for clearing his honour, for assuring his majesty, out of regard to public good, for the safety and welfare of his subjects, is concerned to chastise notorious, scandalous, and infectious sin: he may reserve private sins for the final doom, when *the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light, and the counsels of hearts manifested*, and all things shall receive just reward and recompense; but it is expedient to punish public sin publicly: they who

1 Cor. iv. 15.

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declare their sin as Sodom, with outrageous impudence, are like to find a punishment like that in a common vengeance.

We should therefore in such a case be the more careful of our conversation, more shy of sinful compliance with others, for preventing public calamity; for that our single piety and innocence (or the goodness of a few) may save our country, together with ourselves, from wrath and ruin; seeing it is the gracious method of God in regard to a few righteous men to spare the rest, to release a nation from deserved punishment; for if in Sodom had been found ten righteous persons, it had escaped that horrible destruction; and Israel in Hezekiah's time (although in a very great and general corruption of that age) by a few good men did avoid the like doom; according to that of the Prophet, *Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom.*

Isa. iii. 9.

Gen. xviii. 32.

Isa. i. 9. Lam. iii. 22.

The righteousness of one Noah did save the race of mankind from being extinct.

The zeal of one Phinchas did stop that plague, which had devoured Israel: *Phinchas*, saith God himself, *the son of Eleazar, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for my sake among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.*

Num. xxv. 11. Psal. cvi. 30.

If there had been such another public patron of piety, at the time when Israel was so severely punished by deliverance into captivity, it would have obstructed that lamentable event; God himself so testified; for, *I sought*, said he, *for a man among them, that would make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them:*—and, *Run ye to and fro*, (said he again,) *seek if ye can find a man—in Jerusalem,—and I will pardon it.*

Ezek. xxii. 30, 31.

Jer. v. 1.

Wherefore, beside regard to our own welfare, a consideration of public good, charity toward the world, a compassion of our country should withhold us from conspiring in common transgressions, or omissions of duty.

If we sin with all, we must suffer with all; nor will the

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having so much company in suffering yield any true comfort to us: *Socios habuisse doloris* (to have companions in sorrow) is in itself a pitiful solace, and an unworthy one, savouring of inhuman malignity; for our fellows will bear no share with us, or take off any thing from the burden of our pains, which will be equally to them and us extreme.

God will not oversee us. Ecclus. xvi. 17.

Can it be any considerable satisfaction, that we are sick of an epidemical disease, that sweepeth away multitudes about us and with us?

Is it better for one part, that the whole body is overspread with a noisome leprosy? that its fellow members are tortured with grievous anguish?

Can the sorest pains of our brethren cure the achings of our heart, assuage the pangs of our conscience, or slack the consuming flames beneath?

What advantage can we enjoy from going down to hell in a troop? what ease shall we find there from being encompassed with the doleful groans, the piercing shricks, and dismal howlings of fellow sufferers in that infernal dungeon?

Alas! will it not rather augment our pains to hear the sore complaints, the fierce accusations, the desperate curses of those, whom our compliance hath engaged, or encouraged, or confirmed and hardened in that wicked practice, which did throw them into that disconsolate case?

8. Another principle (near of kin to the former) is a dislike of singularity and solitude; together with the consequences and imputations usually cleaving thereto.

One would not be a man by himself; to be gazed on, to be hooted at as a kind of prodigy, to be deemed an extravagant, odd, humorous, fantastic person, conceited of his own opinion, addicted to his own way, arrogating to himself a liberty of crossing and condemning or contemning the world; therefore he runneth along with the age, complying with its sinful customs, and naughty fashions[a].

[a] He is grievous unto us even to behold: for his life is not like other men's, his ways are of another fashion. Wisd. ii. 15, &c.

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But this is a vain principle; for really to be singular is no fault, to be held so is no disgrace; it is rather in many cases laudable and honourable; and if in any, most reasonably it is in this.

Doth not singularity or paucity increase the price and estimation of every valuable thing? What maketh a jewel but rarity? what but that maketh a diamond more precious than a pebble?

Do not men for singular eminency in any art, skill, faculty, endowment, gain credit and renown? What recommended to posterity the names of Apelles, Praxiteles, Phidias, but excelling in their art beyond the ordinary rate? what gave to Demosthenes and Cicero their esteem, but a singular knack of eloquence? to what did Alexander and Cæsar owe their fame, but to an extraordinary valour? whence got Socrates such a name, but from his singular wisdom? whence Fabricius, Aristides, Cato, but from their singular integrity?

Why then should it be a discouragement or reproach to be singular or extraordinary in the noblest of all faculties, that of living well, in the most excellent of all perfections, that of virtue?

In truth, a man is hardly capable of a greater commendation than this, that he is singularly good; that he surpasseth the vulgar level, and mounteth near heaven in the divinest qualities; that no bad example or fashion hath been able to seduce or corrupt him: this should render him to be most highly esteemed, and most dearly cherished, as a choice ornament of the world, as a most useful instrument of good to mankind.

It were desirable that virtue were more common in the world; but surely its being more rare doth render it more admirable, more illustrious, more glorious.

Heroical virtue is therefore such, because so few do attain or can reach it;

> ——pauci quos æquus amavit
> Jupiter;

A few, who by special assistance of God's grace, and by

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extraordinary resolution, do surmount the obstacles which are set against it.

It was well said of St. Bernard, *To be good among good men hath safety, but to be such among bad men hath also praise;* (a man will be saved by that, but he should be commended for this;) *that hath as much facility as it hath security, this is of as much worth as difficulty*[b].

Indeed if we consider the nature of things, or consult the history of times, we shall find that virtue must be, and ever hath been, liable to this imputation; it is commonly so hard and hazardous to be good in any notable degree, that few will take the pains, or undergo the hardships requisite to attain or exercise it.

Hence the best men (who are such, not according to the blind conjecture of men, but in God's sure esteem) are an
1 Pet. ii. 9. elect, and peculiar sort of people, a few choice persons culled out of a great lump of those, who either reject religion, or embrace it only in verbal profession or formal shew.

Hence it hath been the observation and complaint of all times,

Juv. Sat. xiii. 28.

Rari quippe boni.

Hence the most renowned men for goodness, and who by God's special care have been recommended to us as patterns thereof, have been very singular in it; and their singularity did much enhance the price of their goodness.

Gen. v. 22. It is said of Enoch, that *he walked with God;* but it seemeth with small or no company beside; otherwise it would not have been so particularly recorded of him.

Noah was content to be a man by himself, *a preacher of righteousness* against the vogue, and a practiser thereof
Gen. vii. 1. against the stream of his whole age; for *thee* (said God of him, that is, thee alone) *have I seen righteous before me in this generation.* He was no less singular in his goodness, than in his salvation.

[b] Inter bonos, bonus esse salutem habet, inter malos vero et laudem; illud tantæ facilitatis est, quanta et securitatis; hoc tantæ virtutis, quantæ et difficultatis. *Bern. Ep.* 25.

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Abraham had no common qualities, which moved God to pick him out, and separate him from the rest of mankind, (to single him *from his kindred and country*) to confer special graces and blessings on him. Gen. xii. 1.

Lot had *his righteous soul vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked*, which did inclose him, yet so that he did retain a sound and clear integrity among them. 2 Pet. ii. 7.

Job had this testimony from God, examining Satan concerning him, *Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?* Job. i. 8.

What was the resolution of Joshua? did he value being sole or singular in his practice? No; for, propounding to his people whether they would choose God or not, he told them that however it were, although all of them should forsake God, he was resolved to stick fast to him, not regarding their practice; *But*, said he, *as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord:* that indeed was nobly resolved; it was a resolution worthy of such an hero, to stand alone in so good and wise a choice against his whole nation. It was a resolution suitable to that his behaviour, which he expressed in these words, *My brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed the Lord my God;* in regard to which his comrade Caleb, being of the same spirit with him, is called a man *of another spirit;* different from, and above the mean spirit of his fellows. Josh. xxiv. 15. Josh. xiv. 8. Numb. xiv. 24.

What was David? was he not a man by himself? was he not like one, of whom the poet saith,

> Egregium sanctumque virum si cerno, bimembri
> Hoc monstrum puero, vel fœtæ comparo mulæ?

Juv. Sat. xiii.

So he telleth us, *I*, saith he, *am become as it were a* * *monster unto many, but my sure trust is in thee.*

* A wonder

Did Elias, to shun the imputation of singularity, or in regard to common practice, swerve from his faithful adherence to God's service, although he did passionately resent, and bewail his case? No, for *I have*, said he, *been very jealous for the Lord of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and*

N. Tr. Psal. lxxi. 7. cxix. 51. 1 Pet. iv. 4. Ἐν ᾧ ξενίζονται. 1 Kings xix. 10.

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slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away.

Lam. iii. 14. What was the case of Jeremy? *I*, saith he, *was a derision to all my people, and their song all the day:* yet did

Jer. i. 18. Murus aheneus. he maintain his integrity, and was *a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and a brazen wall against the whole land; against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, and against the people of the land.*

What was the condition of our Lord? was not he σημεῖον ἀντιλεγόμενον, *a prodigy spoken against* by all; against whom *both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together;* who *trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him;* who in his life was regarded by few, and at his death (when he yielded his great attestation to truth and righteousness) was deserted by all?

Luke ii. 34. Heb. xii. 3. Acts iv. 27. Is. lxiii. 3. John xii. 37. John xvi. 32. Matt. xxvi. 31, 56.

What was the Apostles' condition? were they not singular men? were not they held *a sect everywhere spoken against,* and impugned with all violence of spirit and rage? were not they *made a spectacle to the world,* to be gazed at, with scorn and reproach? did not they (a few, simple, poor, weak folk) in doctrine and practice cross and controul the world, confuting, reproving, condemning the generality of men, of error, of folly, of wickedness?

Acts xxviii. 22. 2 Cor. iv. 9. Heb. x. 33. 1 Cor. i. 26.

It can therefore be no just blame or reasonable discouragement to appear singular in the practice of virtue.

Such a singularity is no good argument of fond conceitedness, of wilful humour, of arrogant pride. For,

Can it be fond conceitedness to follow the dictates of the best reason, to observe the advices of the wisest men in all times, to follow the direction and conduct of infinite wisdom; to embrace that, which in most cases natural light, common sense, and continual experience do approve? is it not wildness to do otherwise, though all should do it?

Can it be wilful humour to hold fast our best interest, our truest comfort, our eternal salvation? is it not rather so, to comply with *a perverse generation* in running headlong to their own ruin?

Can it be pride or arrogance to acknowledge our Maker, to be loyal and dutiful to our heavenly Sovereign, to fear the Almighty God, to submit to his will, to *tremble at his word*, to *be afraid of his judgments*, to shun his fierce anger and severe vengeance? SERM. LXVII.

Is it a bad ambition to seek that honour and immortal glory which God doth offer, to shun that everlasting shame and contempt which he doth menace?

Is it not rather monstrous presumption, and enormous vanity, to consort and conspire with rebels against God's law, with despisers of his grace?

In fine, when the most men are foolish and vain, when the world is depraved and dissolute, it is necessary that the best reason should be called humour, and the wisest men should be deemed extravagant; that the best things should be slighted, and the best persons represented with odious characters: but hence to renounce wisdom and goodness is abominably absurd; as if we should therefore put out our light, because it is night about us, or in deep winter should put off our clothes among the wild Indians.

9. Of affinity to the foregoing principles is this most plausible apology for smothering our conscience, namely, a prudential apprehension, that we shall not come off well in openly avowing and abetting goodness, so as to do any good or service to it thereby; but shall thereby rather work prejudice and disservice to it.

The age (will such a wise man say) is incorrigibly degenerate; wickedness is not only bold and impudent, but even outrageously insolent; so that to appear strictly good is a kind of scandal, to pretend conscience for our rule of action is to be ridiculous, to patronize duty is to provoke scorn and obloquy, to mention religion is to prostitute and profane it, to concern God in our doing is to expose his most sacred and venerable name to irrision and foul abuse. Job xii. 4.

Such is the posture of things, that of all the sects and factions which divide the world, that of Epicurean scorners and mockers is become the most formidable; with dis-

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dainful pride insulting and vapouring over the professors of religion, persecuting all soberness of mind and staunchness of manners with a fierce rage and a kind of satanic zeal.

The state of the world being like to that when the holy Psalmist cried out, *Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? how long shall they utter and speak hard things, and all the workers of iniquity boast themselves?*

Psal. xciv. 3, 4. lii. 1. x. 3.

In such a case, is it not seasonable to observe our Lord's advice, *not to give that which is holy unto dogs, nor to cast our pearls before swine;* (not to expose good doctrine and holy practice to scurrilous and sensual people, who will snarl and bark at it, will scorn and trample on it, will bite and tear you for it?)

Matt. vii. 6.

Is it not then wisdom rather fairly to retreat, withdrawing our virtue into a safe retirement, than by openly contesting for it against overmatching forces to hazard its being baffled and abused, its being trampled on and triumphed over, by scornful pride and malice?

In such a world to oppose impiety, what is it but attempting to stop a torrent, to allay a storm, to gape against an oven, to blow against the wind, to kick against the pricks?

But if this case be rightly weighed, it rather strongly may engage us to an open profession and practice of the strictest virtue, than excuse us from it.

St. Paul doth enjoin us *to walk accurately, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time*, for this reason, *because the days are evil*; and *that we should be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, shining among them as lights in the world, and *holding forth the word of life.*

Eph. v. 15. Phil. ii. 15.

*(or holding fast, Ἐπέχοντες.)

And great reason for it; for the worse the world is, the more need there is of good patterns to instruct and guide it, to admonish and excite it to goodness.

If the days are evil, it is high time that we should apply our best endeavours to the mending of them.

If virtue be so near lost, or so quite gone from among

us, it is needful that we should presently seek to recover or to retrieve it[c].

If goodness be so hardly pressed by opposition, then hath every good man the more reason to appear strenuously in its defence, the more are we engaged to hasten with all our might to its relief and succour from irrecoverable oppression.

Every one should labour to raise a bank against that inundation which threateneth to overflow and overwhelm all.

Shall we endure to see the adversary of our welfare to carry all before him without any opposition or obstruction? Shall we suffer iniquity to enjoy a quiet reign, to root and settle itself in its usurpation, to raise itself a title of long occupancy and prescription against goodness?

Is it not then more generous to avow our friendship to virtue, and to abet it in our patronage, when it is under the hatches, and crieth for our aid? is it not vile treachery in such a case to desert it?

Is it not gallant then *to resist sin*, and check wickedness, when it is so high and rampant?

Who will not be virtuous (or endeavour at least to appear such) when virtue is in fashion and request; when it flourisheth in reputation, when all the world doth countenance and abet it? who will not shun or disown wickedness, when it is commonly odious and despicable? who will *not help the Lord against* weak adversaries? Judg. v. 23.

But to embrace virtue upon greatest disadvantages, to disclaim vice in its triumphant prosperity, this is indeed brave and masculine.

He is a worthy man indeed who can keep the field among so many stout enemies, who can stand upright *in a crooked generation;* who can despise the scorn, defy the rage, bear up against the impudence and malignity of vain, base, wretched men, combining to supplant and extirpate goodness.

Nor have we reason in proceeding thus to despair of

[c] Specta juvenis—in ea tempora natus es, quibus formare animum expediat constantibus exemplis. *Tac. Ann.* 16.

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good success; we need not fear thereby to expose the credit, or endanger the interest of goodness. For,

How can we fail of prospering in the maintenance of God's cause and special concern? Although men may commonly desert him, yet doth he not utterly forsake them, or give over the government of the world; he may let the reins lie a little loose, but he doth not put them out of his hands: his power cannot be abated, his providence can never sleep; though he is so patient in suffering wicked men to provoke him, yet he will not be *slack* in assisting good men, who take his part, and undertake to maintain his honour; assuredly he will help them who *help him against the mighty.*

Deut. xxxii. 30. Josh. xxiii. 10. Num. xxv. 3. Jer. xv. 20. Jer. i. 19. xx. 11.

In this service *one will chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight;* one David will knock down never so many Philistines reproaching God's name; one Phinehas will repress the petulancy of a whole nation; one Jeremy shall be *a brazen wall against a whole land;* God will make it good to such an one, *They shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.*

One sober man in defence of virtue is able to discomfit all the Hectors, the huffing blades, and boisterous ruffians in the world, attacking them with sound discretion and steady resolution: for all their bravery and confidence, they

Jam. iv. 7.

are easily mated; and being like their sire, if you *resist them, they will flee from you*: a prudent, seasonable, smart check will quash their spurious courage and giddy audacity. Their contempt of goodness is but feigned; they cannot really for their hearts despise it; there is stamped on their souls and consciences such a respect, such an awe thereof, which they cannot quite rase out: wherefore if you briskly represent it to them, and challenge their reverence to it, they cannot but succumb, their own mind and conscience joining to back your reproof; so that if you can-

Jer. xx. 11.

not reclaim them, you shall however repress them; if you

1 Pet. ii. 15.

cannot correct their vice, you shall yet confound their impudence; *For so*, saith St. Peter, *it is the will of God, that*

with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; and, *Having a good conscience, that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your conversation in Christ.* 1 Pet. iii. 16. Tit. ii. 8.

It is only sneaking, or a timorous pretence to virtue which they contemn; but they will admire those who stiffly adhere to it, and stoutly maintain it.

We shall therefore expose virtue, not by frankly avowing it, but by faintly slinking from it, when occasion requireth an open acknowledgment and exemplary practice of it.

If the world is so very bad, it will not be worse for our attempt to better it; it will be so much at least better, that one therein hath that worthy purpose.

It was bad when Noah preached righteousness to it.

It was bad when Elias was so zealous for the Lord of hosts.

It was bad when Jeremy was derided for declaring God's will and exhorting to repentance.

They were very bad times, when all the Prophets did strive so earnestly to reclaim men from their wickedness; being reproached and persecuted for doing so, but not deterred from doing it; the resentment they had of the badness of times did not make them abandon the means of its recovery from it.

The whole world did lie in wickedness when the Apostles did undertake the reformation of it. 1 John v. 19.

In fine, if men generally upon such accounts of despairing prudence neglect to own goodness, what must the consequence be? what, but that piety shall be cashiered, that virtue shall be discarded, that conscience shall be quite exploded and exterminated from the world? that consequently an horrible deluge of various mischiefs, a general prevalence of lewdness and luxury, of fraud and violence, of faction and tumult, a violation of all faith and friendship, a dissolution of all order and peace will ensue? None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth— Isa. lix. 4.

And what must grow upon this state of things? what but another flood of judgments, and woful vengeance?

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when God's patience hath been tried to the utmost, and his goodness tired with bearing such a load of abominations, he will be forced to cry out, *Shall I not visit for these things? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*

Jer. v. 29. Isa. i. 24. lix. 17.

Stulta calliditas, perverse imitata prudentiam. *Cic. de Of.* iii. p. 143.

10. Another principle of dispensing with conscience in public duties and conversation before men is a kind of perverse wisdom, or subtle craft, affecting the name of discretion.

Men see there are divers inconveniences attending the profession of respect to God and conscience in all their doings; that the world may dislike and disesteem them, that divers persons will hate, malign, reproach, and persecute them for it; that they may chance to be crossed in their designs, and lose profits or preferments thereby; therefore they deem it advisable to decline it in open view, making up the defect by adoring and serving God in private.

Thus they think to salve all, by maintaining a neutrality, and compounding the business, yielding an open conformity to the world, and reserving a secret regard to God; sinning publicly, and privately repenting; retaining their credit, quiet, ease, pleasure, with their conscience and peace of mind; affecting some piety, but avoiding the scandal of it.

Gal. v. 11.

They would hold fair with both sides; so that neither the world should persecute them for crossing its humour, nor God punish them for transgressing his will.

They drive a subtle trade, hoping to gain on all hands, both the benefits of the other, and the advantages of this world, to save their soul, and serve their worldly interests together:

Eccles. vii. 16, 17.

This they would believe a point of special wisdom, prescribed by Solomon: *Be not righteous overmuch, neither make thyself overwise; for why shouldest thou destroy thyself? Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest thou die before the time?*

But this rooking trick, to hedge thus and save stakes, to play fast and loose, to dodge and shuffle with God, God doth not like, nor will suffer himself to be gulled with it.

He will not be satisfied with such a mongrel, partial, and *halting* service. SERM. LXVII.

He will not allow us to withhold that half of his service (the external, visible part thereof) which is most honourable to him, and most beneficial to our neighbour. 1 Kings xviii. 21.

He cannot endure a double heart, or a double face; one looking upward to heaven, another downward to the earth[e].

He exacteth from us an integrity of heart and perfection of obedience; that we should love him with our whole heart, that we should be *perfect with him*, that we should walk uprightly, not *deflecting to the right hand or left* from our duty.

He will not endure that we should hold amity or correspondence with his enemies; particularly with the world, the friendship whereof he hath declared inconsistent with his favour; and that it is a spiritual adultery to impart any of our affections to it; according to that of St. James; *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? so that whosoever will be a friend of the world becometh the enemy of God.* Jam. iv. iii. 1 John ii. 15. Καθίσατε. (John xv. 19. xvii. 14.) Ps. xxxvii. xxxviii. O. Tr. Phil. ii. 5.

We may shift as well as we can in the world, provided that we hold innocence, and do not conspire with it against God, by violation of our duty to him[f]: *Be wise as serpents, innocent as doves.* Matt. x. 16. *(as lambs,* Luke x. 3.)

They reproach good men as superstitious; who are afraid of invisible powers; who let go things in hand (present interests and pleasures) for a reversion and hope.

As if God's word were not sufficient security; as if we may not as well rely upon things conspicuous to reason, as those which are obvious to sense.

If Christianity be plainly false, they say well; but if it be true, very absurdly; yea if probable, very imprudently; yea if possible, not wisely. Ατοποι. 2 Thess. iii. 2.

[e] Psal. xii. 2. Jam. i. 8. iv. 8. 2 Chron. xii. 33. 1 Tim. iii. 8. Δίλογος. Psal. xxxviii. 37. Their heart was not whole with him. (O. Tr.) Deut. xviii. 13. Job i. 8. Psal. xliv. 18. cxix. 51. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 2. Job xxiii. 11. Matt. vi. 24. Luke xvi. 13. Δυσὶ κυρίοις.

[f] Rom. xvi. 19. Σοφὺς εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν, ἀκεραίους δὲ εἰς τὸ κακόν.

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They charge conscientious men with timorousness, faintheartedness.

It is timorousness or blameable fear to dread things without reason, things nowise formidable, which cannot hurt us; such a timorous man is he, that out of fear of men, (of displeasing them, of suffering by them, of their reproach,) &c. transgresseth his duty.

But to fear God is wisdom, soberness, duty, virtue; it is handsome and honourable, becoming our nature, our condition; the passion of fear was chiefly put in us for this purpose, as its best use.

Is it courage, and not rather madness to provoke, to resist, to challenge, to cope with the Almighty? is it courage to throw one's self down a precipice, to leap into the infernal lake? is it gallantry to dare transgress all reason and sobriety? is it brave to be wild and senseless, &c.?

It is true courage to resist and repel sin assaulting a man with whatever advantages; to dare to do well, although vain men deride, and spiteful men hate us for it.

It is a kind of martyrdom to be ill used by the world for adhering to his duty: and he hath a share in that, *Blessed are they, who suffer for righteousness.*

Matt. x. 39. Ὁ εὑρὼν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ, ἀπολέσει αὐτήν.

In fine, it is a vain prudence to be thus politic with God; whereby we shall lose the whole, or that part which is invaluable, out of presumption to save a small inconsiderable part.

Gal. v. 11. Matt. x. 38. xvi. 24. Phil. iii. 8.

If this be prudence, *then*, as St. Paul saith, *is the offence of the cross ceased.*

Then our Lord prescribed a foolish condition.

Then were the Apostles very imprudent, who deserted all, and suffered so much for their conscience; being content to secure their spiritual interest, and to obtain the eternal rewards of piety; *choosing the better part, which could not be taken from them.*

Luke x. 42.

Jam. iii. 13.

What the true wisdom is in such cases St. James hath told us: *Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.*

SERMON LXVII.

OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

PSALM cxlv. 9.

The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.

THE goodness of God is a frequented theme; to many perhaps it may seem vulgar and trite; so that discourse thereon, like a story often told, may be nauseous to their ears: but in truth neither can we speak too much upon this most excellent subject, nor ought we ever to be weary in hearing about it; for it is a sign that the palate of our mind is distempered, if we do not with delight and affection relish any mention of divine goodness. Yea, the observation of men's common practice would induce us to think, that either this point is not so well known, or but little believed, or at least not well considered and applied. For how could we be so void of love to God, of gratitude toward him, of faith and hope in him, were we thoroughly persuaded, did we seriously consider, that he is so exceedingly good toward us? How can we be so insensible of the benefits we enjoy, so distrustful of finding succours and supplies in our need, so dissatisfied and discontented with what befalls us, if we conceive and weigh, that all things do proceed from, are guided and governed by immense goodness? How also, if men have such an opinion of God impressed on their minds, comes it to pass, that they are so little careful to resemble and imitate him in kindness, bounty, and mercy to one ano-

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ther? How is it, in fine, that the most powerful argument to all manner of good practice, and the mightiest aggravation of sin, if well known and pondered, hath so little force and efficacy upon us? From experience therefore this argument may seem scarce sufficiently inculcated. We may add, that discourse upon this attribute[a] (which above all other attributes doth render God peculiarly admirable and amiable) hath this special advantage beyond other discourses, that it doth, if our hearts conspire therewith, approach most nearly to the formal exercise of the most high and heavenly parts of devotion, praise and thanksgiving; that it more immediately conduces to the breeding, the nourishing, the augmenting in us the best and noblest of pious affections, love and reverence to God; trust and hope in him; willing resolutions to please and serve him; whence it is consequent, that we cannot too much employ our thoughts, our words, or our attention upon this point. Besides so much reason, we have also good example to countenance us in so doing: we have the precedent of the holy Psalmist resolving to make it his constant and continual employment: *I will sing*, saith he, *of the mercies of the Lord; with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.* And, *Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever;* (that blessing and praising God, the context shews to have consisted especially in the declaration of God's great goodness:) and, *It is a good thing*, saith he again, *to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O thou most High: to shew forth thy loving kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night.* Such were his intentions, and such his judgment about this practice; and we find him in effect true and answerable to them; every song of his, every meditation, every exercise of devotion chiefly harping upon this string; and he earnestly wishes that others would consent and consort with him

Ps. lxxxix. 1.

Psal. cxlv. 2.

Psal. xcii. 1, 2.

——Θεὸς, οὗ πολλῶν ὄντων, ἐφ' οἷς θαυμάζεται, οὐδὲν ἧττον ὡς τὸ πάντας ἐνεργέτειν ἰδιωτατόν. *Naz. Orat.* 26.

therein; he earnestly exhorts and excites them thereto: *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Praise the Lord, O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.* That one example might sufficiently authorize this practice; but we have innumerable others, and those the highest that can be, to encourage and engage us thereto; even the whole choir of heaven, whose perpetual business and happy entertainment it is to contemplate with their minds, to celebrate with their voices, the immense goodness of God; *They have,* as it is in the Revelation, *no rest day or night from performing this office.* Such is the subject of our discourse; the which our text most plainly and fully expresses; asserting not only the goodness of God, but the universal and boundless extent thereof; *The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies* (or *his bowels of affection and pity*) *are over all his works.* And that God indeed is such, we shall first endeavour to declare, then shall briefly apply the consideration thereof to practice.

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Psal. cvii. 8. cvi. 1.

Rev. iv. 8.

That God the Lord, and Maker of all things, is of himself, in regard to all his creatures, especially to us men, superlatively good, that is, disposed never without just or necessary cause to harm us, and inclinable to do us all possible and befitting good, the universal frame of nature and the constant course of Providence do afford us sufficient reason to conceive, and most frequent, most express testimonies of holy Scripture do more fully demonstrate. There is no argument from natural effects discernible by us, which proveth God's existence, (and innumerable such there are, every sort of things well studied may afford some,) the which doth not together persuade God to be very kind and benign; careful to impart to us all befitting good, suitable to our natural capacity and condition: and unwilling that any considerable harm, any extreme want or pain should befall us. (I interpose such limitations, for that an absolute, or universal and perpetual exemption from all kinds or all degrees of inconvenience, an accumulation of all sorts of appearing good upon us,

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doth not become or suit our natural state of being, or our rank in perfection among creatures; neither, all things being duly stated and computed, will it turn to best account for us.) The best (no less convincing than obvious) arguments, asserting the existence of a Deity, are deduced from the manifold and manifest footsteps of admirable wisdom, skill, and design apparent in the general order, and in the particular frame of creatures; the beautiful harmony of the whole, and the artificial contrivance of each part of the world; the which it is hardly possible that any unprejudiced and undistempered mind should conceive to proceed from blind chance, or as blind necessity. But with this wisdom are always complicated no less evident marks of goodness. We cannot, in all that vast bulk of the creation, and numberless variety of things, discover any piece of mere pomp, or dry curiosity; every thing seems to have some beneficial tendency; according to which it confers somewhat to the need, convenience, or comfort of those principal creatures, which are endued with sense and capacity to enjoy them. Most of them have a palpable relation to the benefit (to the subsistence or delight) of living creatures; and especially in an ultimate relation to the benefit of man; and the rest, although their immediate use be not to our dim sight so discernible, may therefore be reasonably presumed in their natural designation to regard the same end. Wherefore as upon consideration of that ample provision, which is made in nature for the necessary sustenance, defence, and relief, for the convenience, delight, and satisfaction of every creature, any man, who is not careless or stupid, may be induced to cry out with the Psalmist, *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all:* so may he with no less reason and ground after him pronounce and acknowledge; *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord: The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy: Thy mercy is great unto the heavens: Thy mercy is great above the heavens.* It is indeed because divine goodness is freely diffusive and communicative of itself; because essential love is active and fruitful in beneficence; because

Psal. civ. 24.

Ps. xxxiii. 5. cxix. 64. lvii. 10. cviii. 4. civ. 10, &c. lxv. 11. ciii. 4.

highest excellency is void of all envy, selfishness, and tena- SERM. LXVIII.
city, that the world was produced such as it was; those perfections being intrinsical to God's nature, disposed him to bestow so much of being, of beauty, of pleasure upon his creatures. *He openeth his hand, they are filled with good:* it is from God's open hand, his unconfined bounty and liberality, that all creatures do receive all that good which fills them, which satisfies their needs, and satiates their desires. Every pleasant object we view, every sweet and savoury morsel we taste, every fragrancy we smell, every harmony we hear; the wholesome, the cheering, the useful, yea, the innocent and inoffensive qualities of every thing we do use and enjoy, are so many perspicuous arguments of divine goodness; we may not only by our reason collect it, but we even touch and feel it with all our senses. Ps. civ. 28.

The like conclusion may be inferred from the observation of divine Providence. Every signification, or experiment, whence we may reasonably infer that divine power and wisdom do concur in upholding, managing, and directing the general state of things, or the particular affairs of men, being well examined and weighed, would afford reason apt to persuade, that the Governor of the world is graciously affected toward his creatures and subjects. The general preservation of things in their natural constitution and order: the dispensing constant vicissitudes of season, so as may serve for the supply of our needs; the maintaining such a course of things in the world, that, notwithstanding the great irregularity of will, and violence of passion in so many persons; yet men do ordinarily shift so as to live tolerably upon earth in peace and safety, and enjoyment of competent accommodations for life; with the aids and consolations arising from mutual society; the supports, encouragements, and rewards of virtue many times in a strange manner administered; the restraints, disappointments, and seasonable chastisements of wickedness, especially when it grows exorbitant and outrageous, unexpectedly intervening, with the like passages of Providence, will, to him that shall *regard the works of the Lord, and* Ps. xxviii. 5. Isa. v. 12.

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the operation of his hands, sufficiently declare as the other glorious attributes, (wisdom, power, and justice,) so especially the goodness of him, who presides over the world; assuring that he is a friend to the welfare, and dislikes the misery of mankind. He that shall well observe and consider how among so many fierce and hardhearted, so many crafty and spiteful, so many domineering and devouring spirits, the poor and weak, the simple and harmless sort of people do however subsist, and enjoy somewhat, cannot but suspect that an undiscernible hand, full of pity and bounty, doth often convey the necessary supports of life to them, doth often divert imminent mischiefs from them; cannot but acknowledge it credible, what the holy Scripture teacheth, that God is the friend, and patron, and protector of those needy and helpless people,

Ps. xiv. 6. tot. x. 14. lxxii. 12.

redeeming their soul from deceit and violence, as the Psalmist speaks; that he is, as the Prophet expresseth it,

Isa. xxv. 4.

a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall. He that shall remark, how frequently, in an unaccountable way, succour and relief do spring up to just and innocent persons; so that in a whole age, as the Psalmist observed,

Psal. xxxvii. 25.

such persons do not appear destitute or forsaken; how also iniquity is commonly stopped in its full career, and then easily receives a check, when its violence seemed uncontrollable; how likewise many times the world is rescued from confusions and distractions unextricable by any visible wit or force; with other like occurrences in human affairs; must admit it for a reasonable hypothesis (fit to render a cause of such appearances) that a transcendent goodness doth secretly interpose, furthering the production of such effects: he must upon such observation be ready to verify that of the Psalmist:

Psal. lviii. ult.

Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily there is a God that judgeth the earth. St. Paul instructs us, that in past times (that is, in all generations from the beginning of things) *God did attest himself* to be the Governor of the world; How? ἀγαθοποιῶν, by his beneficence; *giving to men showers from*

Acts xiv. 17.

heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness: competent evidences, it seems, these were of his providence, and withal (supposing that) certain demonstrations of his goodness: although some have abused this kind of testimony, or argumentation, so valid in itself, unto a contrary purpose; alleging, that if God ruled the world, so much wickedness and impiety would not be tolerated therein; that ingrateful and evil men could not so thrive and flourish; that more speedy and more severe vengeance would be executed; that benefits would not be scattered among the crowd of men, with so promiscuous and undistinguishing a freeness. But such discourses, upon a just and true account, do only infer the great patience and clemency, the unconfined mercy and bounty of our Lord; that he is in disposition very different from pettish and impatient man, who, should he have the reins put into his hands, and in his administration of things should be so often neglected, crossed, abused, would soon overturn all things; and, being himself discomposed with passion, would precipitate the world into confusion and ruin. SERM. LXVIII.

Things would not have subsisted hitherto, and continued in their orderly course, but by the moderation of an immense goodness; by that

——magni custos clementia mundi. Claud.

It is *by the Lord's mercies that we* (we, the whole body of sinful men, so guilty of heinous provocations and rebellions against our Maker) *are not consumed.* And what again God in the Prophet speaks concerning Israel, he might have applied to the whole nation of men: *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? I will not execute the fierceness of my anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man.* The reason (for I am God, and not man) is observable; implying (upon parity of reason in the cases, concerning that one nation, and concerning the body of men) that it is an indulgence and forbearance above, if not contrary to the temper of man, and even beyond hu- Lam. iii. 32. Hos. xi. 8.

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man conceit, whereby the state of things here doth subsist, and is preserved from ruin.

Thus nature and thus Providence do bear witness concerning the disposition of God. As for Scripture, there is nothing either in way of positive assertion more frequently inculcated, or by more illustrious examples set forth, and made palpable, than this attribute of God. When God would impart a portraiture or description of himself to his dearest friend and favourite, Moses; the first and chief lineaments thereof are several sorts, or several instances of goodness; he expresses himself *Merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness (Merciful: El rachum)* a אל רחום *God of pitying*, or strong in pity; that is, most apt to commiserate and to succour those who are in need or distress. *Gracious*, that is, ready both freely to forgive wrongs, and to dispense favours. *Long suffering*, or *longus irarum*, that is, not soon moved, or apt easily to conceive displeasure; not hasty in execution of vengeance, or venting his anger in hurtful effects. *Abundant in goodness*, that is, not sparing as to quantity or quality, either in the multitude or magnitude of his favours, but in all respects exceedingly liberal; conferring willingly both very many and very great benefits. Such did God represent himself to Moses, when he desired a fuller knowledge and nearer acquaintance with him, than ordinary means afford. The same character in substance we have often repeated, and sometimes with advantage of emphatical expression, well deserving our observation and regard; as when the Prophet Joel saith, that God *is penitent, or sorry, for evil inflicted*; and Micah, that *he delighteth in mercy*; and when Nehemiah calleth him a *God of pardons*; and when Isaiah represents him as *waiting* (or seeking occasions) *to be gracious*: and all this in the Old Testament, where God seems to look upon man with a less serene and debonair aspect. Indeed, as that dispensation (suitably to the nature and condition of things under it) doth set out God's mercy and goodness, with especial relation to this present world, or temporal estate; so the New one more abundantly displays his more excellent

Exod. xxxiv. 6.

Psal. lxxxvi. 5. ciii. 8, &c.

Joel ii. 13. Micah vii. 18. Neh. ix. 17.

Isa. xxx. 18.

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care and love of our souls; his great tenderness of our spiritual and eternal welfare. It is all of it in its nature and design but as it were one entire declaration of the τὸ χρηστὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, (the beneficial disposition, the benignity, or bountifulness of God, as St. Paul telleth us;) it is a rare project of divine philanthropy; an illustrious affidavit of God's wonderful propensity to bless and save mankind; manifested by the highest expressions and instances of love and goodness that were possible (For his not sparing his own Son, *the express image of his substance*, the dearest object of his infinite love, the partaker of his eternal nature and glory, but delivering him up a sacrifice for our offences; his most earnest wooing our baseness and unworthiness to reconciliation with him, and admission or acceptance of his favour; his tendering upon so fair and easy terms an endless life in perfect joy and bliss; his furnishing us with so plentiful means and powerful aids for attaining that happy state—how pregnant demonstrations are these, of unspeakable goodness toward us! whence) The ordinary titles in this dispensation attributed unto him, are, *the God of love and peace, of hope, of patience; of all grace, of all consolation; the Father of pities, rich in mercy, full of bowels; love and goodness itself.* Thus doth the Scripture positively assert God's goodness; thus it directly represents and describes his gracious disposition toward us. And as for examples, (which must serve as to illustrate and explain, so also to verify and assure matters of this nature,) if we carefully attend to God's ordinary proceedings with men there recorded, we shall find this disposition very conspicuous in them. Who can recount the number, or set out the value of those instances wherein God's goodness is expressed toward such as loved him? of his admirable condescension in drawing them to him; of the affectionate tenderness, with which he constantly embraced them; of his merciful indulgence toward them, when provoked by their untowardly behaviour; of his kind acceptance, and munificent recompensing their endeavours to please him; of his deep compassionating their

Rom. ii. 4.

Rom. v. 21.

2 Cor. xiii. 11. i. 3. 1 Pet. v. 10. Eph. ii. 4. Jam. v. 11. 1 John iv. 8.

Luke vi. 35. For he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil.

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sufferings; of his vigilant carefulness over them, and over all their concernments? Methinks the highest expressions that language, assisted with all its helps of metaphor and resemblance, can afford, are very languid and faint in comparison of what they strain to represent, when the goodness of God toward them who love him comes to be expressed: *As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him: Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him:* so David strives to utter it, but with similitudes far short of the truth. If any will come near to reach it, it is that in Moses and Zechariah, when they are compared to *the apple of God's eye*, that is, to the most dear and tender part, as it were, about him.

Psal. xxxvi. 6. Psal. ciii. 11, 13.

Deut. xxxii. 10. Zech. ii. 8.

We find them often styled, and ever treated, as friends and as children; and that in a sense transcending the vulgar signification of those words; for, what friendship could endure, could pass over, could forget, could admit an entire reconciliation and re-establishment in affection after such heinous indignities, such infidelities, such undutifulness, as were those of Adam, of Noah, of David, of Peter? Who would have received into favour and familiarity a Manasses, a Magdalen, a Paul? Who would so far extend his regard upon the posterity (upon such a posterity, so untoward, so unworthy) of his friend, as God did upon that of Abraham, in respect unto him? What great prince would employ his principal courtiers to guard and serve a poor attendant, a mean subject of his? Yet, *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them;* and many instances we have of those glorious inhabitants of heaven by God's appointment stooping down to wait upon and to perform service to the sons of men. But upon examples of this nature, being numberless, and composing indeed the main body of the sacred history, (it being chiefly designed to represent them,) I shall not insist; I shall only observe, for preventing or satisfying objections, (yea, indeed, for turning them to the advantage and confirmation of that which we

John xv. 14. 2 Chron. xx. 7.

Ps. xxxiv. 7.

assert,) that even in those cases, wherein God's highest severity hath been exercised, when God hath purposed to exhibit most dreadful instances of his justice upon the most provocative occasions; we may discern his goodness eminently shewing itself[b]: that even in the greatest extremity of his displeasure, in his acts of highest vengeance, *mercy* doth *κατακαυχᾶσθαι τῆς κρίσεως*, (as St. James speaketh,) *boast itself, and triumph over justice:* that God, as the sun, (to use Tertullian's similitude,) when he seems most to infest and scorch us, doth even then dispense useful and healthful influences upon us[c]. Even, I say, in the most terrible and amazing examples of divine justice (such as were the ejecting and excluding mankind from Paradise; the general destruction in the deluge; the exscinding and extirpation of the Amorites, together with other inhabitants of Canaan; the delivering Israel and Judah into the Assyrian thraldom, the final destruction of Jerusalem, together with the dispersion of the Jewish nation over the world, and its sad consequences) we may (not hardly) observe particulars, more than savouring of great mercy and goodness.

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Jam. ii. 13.

Vide Chrys. Tom. vi. Or. 8. p. 63. optime.

1. That (in most of these cases, in all according to some account) God was not moved to the displeasure productive of those effects but upon very great considerations. That he did not seek advantages, nor embrace all occasions; but was incensed by superlative degrees of iniquity and impurity, (such in their own nature, and much aggravated by their circumstances,) such as rendered common life inconvenient and insupportable to men; made the earth to stink with their filth and corruption; to groan under the burden and weight of them; to pant and labour for a riddance from them.

[b] Γίνεται φιλανθρωπία ἡ τιμωρία· ὅπω γὰρ ἐγὼ πέπεισμαι κολάζειν τὸν Θεόν. *Naz. Orat.* 38.

Ἐγὼ τοσαύτην περίουσιαν εἶναι φημὶ τῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ κηδεμονίας, ὡς μὴ μόνον ἀφ' ὧν ἐτίμησεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀφ' ὧν ἐκόλασεν ὁμοίως ἡμᾶς δύνασθαι τὴν ἀγαθότητα αὐτοῦ δεικνύναι, καὶ τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν. *Chrys.* Ἀνδρ. ζ'.

Ὁ Θεὸς ἀπαθὴς ὤν, κἂν ἐνεργητῇ, κἂν κολάζῃ, ὁμοίως ἐστὶν ἀγαθός. *Ibid.*

[c] Tunc maxime est optimus, cum tibi non bonus; sicut sol tibi etiam quando non putas optimus ut utilis, &c. *Tertull. in Marc.* ii. 2.

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2. That God did not upon the first glimpses of provocation proceed to the execution and discharge of his wrath, but did with wonderful patience expect a change in the offenders, *waiting to be gracious*, as the Prophet speaketh; affording more than competent time, and means more than sufficient of appeasing him by repentance; vouchsafing frequent admonitions, solicitations, threatenings, moderate corrections, and other such proper methods conducing to their amendment and to their preservation.

Isa. xxx. 18.

3. That the inflictions themselves, how grievous soever in appearance, were not really extreme in measure; not accompanied with so acute torments, nor with so lingering pains, nor with so utter a ruin, as might have been inflicted; but that (as Ezra, in respect to one of those cases, confesseth) they *were less than their iniquities deserved*. That, as it is in the Psalm, *He did not stir up all his wrath;* which would have immediately consumed them, or infinitely tormented them.

Ezr. ix. 13. Ps. lxxviii. 38.

4. That (consequently upon some of those premises) the afflictions brought upon them were in a sort rather necessary than voluntary in respect of him; rather a natural fruit of their dispositions and dealings, than a free result of his will; however contrary to his primary intentions and desires. Whence he no less truly than earnestly disclaims having any pleasure in their death, that he *afflicted willingly, or grieved the children of men;* and charges their disasters upon themselves, as the sole causes of them.

Ezek. xviii. 23, 32. xxxiii. 11. Lam. iii. 33. Hos. xiii. 9.

5. That farther, the chastisements inflicted were wholesome and profitable, both in their own nature, and according to his design [d]; both in respect to the generality of men, (who by them were warned, and by such examples deterred from incurring the like mischiefs; were kept from the inconveniences, secured from the temptations, the violences, the allurements, the contagions of the pre-

[d] Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ζ'.
Ὁμοῦ καὶ δικαστὴς καὶ ἰατρὸς καὶ διδάσκαλός ἐστιν ὁ Θεός. *Ibid.*

sent evil state; according to that reason alleged for punishments of this kind: *All the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously,)* and in regard to the sufferers themselves, who thereby were prevented from proceeding farther in their wicked courses[e]; accumulating (or *treasuring up*, as the Apostle speaketh) farther degrees of *wrath*, as obdurate and incorrigible people will surely do; *(Why*, saith the Prophet, *should ye be stricken any more?* (to what purpose is moderate correction?) *Ye will revolt more and more.)* That he did with a kind of violence to his own inclinations, and reluctancy, inflict punishments on them. *O Ephraim, how shall I give thee up, O Ephraim?* Yea farther: SERM. LXVIII. Deut. xvii. 13. Rom. ii. 5. Isa. i. 5. xxvi. 10. Hos. xi. 8.

6. That, during their sufferance, God did bear compassion toward them who underwent it. *His bowels*, as we are told, *sounded and were troubled;* his *heart was turned within him;* his *repentings were kindled together; in all their afflictions himself was afflicted; he remembered, and considered they were but dust;* that they *were but flesh*, (that they were but of a weak and frail temper; that they were naturally prone to corruption and evil,) and did therefore pity their infirmity and their misery. Isa. lxiii. 9, 15. Hos. xi. 8. Jer. xxxi. 20. Gen. vi. 3. viii. 21. Psal. ciii. 14. lxxviii. 39.

7. That God *in his wrath remembered mercy*, (as the prophet Habakkuk speaks,) mixing gracious intentions of future refreshment and reparation with the present executions of justice. *I know*, saith he in the prophet Jeremiah, *the thoughts that I think toward you; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Behold, I will bring health and cure, I will cure them, and will reveal unto them abundance of peace and truth.* And, *For a small moment*, saith he again in Isaiah, *have I forsaken thee: but with great mercies will I gather thee.* And, *Ye shall be comforted concerning the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem*— and, *ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it*, saith the Lord; (he saith so in Ezekiel;) Hab. iii. 2. Gen. vi. 3. viii. 21. Jer. xxix. 11. xxxiii. 6. Isa. liv. 7. Ezek. xiv. 2, 23.

[e] Ἐπιτίθησι τιμωρίαν, οὐ τῶν ἀπελθόντων ἁπάντων δίκην, ἀλλὰ τὰ μέλλοντα διορθώμενος. *Chrys*, tom. viii. p. 99.

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without cause, that is, without a beneficial design toward them.

8. Lastly, That he always signified a readiness to turn from his anger, and to forgive them; and upon very equal and easy terms to be fully reconciled to them; according to that in the Psalm, *He doth not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever;* but upon any reasonable overtures of humiliation, confession, and conversion to him, was ready to abate, yea, to remove the effects of his displeasure: *Thou wast a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.*

Ps. ciii. 9.

Psal. xcix. 8.

These particulars, if we attentively survey those dreadful examples of divine severity forementioned, (the greatest which history acquaints us with, or which have been shewed on this theatre of human affairs,) we may observe most of them in all, all of them in some, either plainly expressed, or sufficiently insinuated by the circumstances observable in the historical narrations concerning them; so that even the harshest instances of God's wrathful dealing with some men, may well serve to the illustration of his mercy and goodness toward all men; may evince it true, what our Lord affirms, that God is χρηστὸς ἐπὶ ἀχαρίστους καὶ πονηρούς, *kind and beneficent even to the most ingrateful and unworthy persons.* To make which observation good, and consequently to assert the verity of our text (that *God is good unto all, and merciful over all his works)* against the most plausible exceptions, I shall examine the particulars in the following discourse.

Luke vii. 35.

SERMON LXIX.

OF THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

PSALM cxlv. 9.

The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.

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I SHALL now more particularly consider the several instances before mentioned.

I. The punishment inflicted on mankind for the first transgression containeth in it much of depth and mystery, surpassing perhaps all capacity of man to reach; its full comprehension being by divine wisdom, I conceive, purposely concealed from us; so that I cannot pretend thoroughly to explain it, and shall not therefore speak much about it.

This indeed is clear, that God did in his proceedings, occasioned thereby, intend remarkably to evidence his grievous resentment and indignation against wilful disobedience; yet in the management thereof we may observe, that,

1. After that provocation (in itself so high, and liable to so great aggravations) [a] God did express his resentment in so calm and gentle a manner, that Adam, though abashed upon the conscience of his fault, was not yet by the vehemency of the reproof utterly dismayed or dejected.

[a] Vid. Chrys. Ἀνδρ. ζ'. Οὐ γὰρ εἶπε, καθάπερ εἰκὸς ἦν ὑβρισμένον εἰπεῖν ὦ μιαρὲ, καὶ παμμίαρε, &c. *Ibid.*

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2. God used great moderation in the infliction of this punishment; mitigating the extremity of the sentence justly decreed and plainly declared to Adam, (that, in case of his offending against the law prescribed him, he should immediately die,) for notwithstanding his forfeiture that very day of life, God reprieved him, and allowed him a long life, almost of a thousand years, after.

Gen. ii. 7.

3. God did not quite reject man thereupon, nor did withdraw his fatherly care and providence from him, but openly continued them; insomuch, that immediately after the curse pronounced upon our first parents, the next passage we meet with is, that unto Adam and his wife did the Lord make coats, and clothed them.

Gen. iii. 21.

4. Although indeed man was by his fault a great loser, and became deprived of high advantages, yet the mercy of God did leave him in no very deplorable estate, simply considered, as to his life here; the relics of his first estate, and the benefits continued to him, being very considerable; so that we, the inheritors of that great disaster, do commonly find the enjoyment of life, with the conveniences attending it, to be sweet and desirable.

5. The event manifests, that while God in appearance so severely punished mankind, he did in his mind reserve thoughts of highest kindness toward us; even then designing not only to restore us to our former degree, but to raise us to a capacity of obtaining a far more high pitch of happiness. While he excluded us from a terrestrial paradise here, he provided a far better celestial one, into which, if we please, by obedience to his holy laws, we may certainly enter. So that in this of all most heavy instance of vengeance, God's exceeding goodness and clemency do upon several considerations most clearly shine.

II. The calamity, which by the general deluge did overflow the world, was not (we may consider) brought upon men but in regard to the most enormous offences long continued in, and after amendment was become desperate; not till after much forbearance, and till men were grown to a superlative pitch of wickedness, by no fit means

(by no friendly warning, no sharp reprehension, no moderate chastisement) corrigible; not until the earth was become (especially for persons of any innocence or integrity) no tolerable habitation, but a theatre of lamentable tragedies, a seat of horrid iniquity, a sink of loathsome impurity. So that in reason it was to be esteemed rather a favour to mankind, to rescue it from so unhappy a state, than to suffer it to persist therein. To snatch men away out of so uncomfortable a place, from so wretched a condition, was a mercy; it had been a judgment to have left them annoying, rifling, and harassing; biting, tearing, and devouring; yea, defiling and debauching each other; and so heaping upon themselves loads of guilt, and deeper obligations to vengeance. *The earth*, saith the text, *was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence. God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth;* which universal and extreme corruption had not in probability sprung up in a small time; for, SERM. LXIX. Gen. vi. 11, 12.

Nemo repente fuit turpissimus,——

is true not only of single men, but of communities; no people, no age doth suddenly degenerate into extreme degrees of wickedness; so that the divine patience had long endured and attended upon men, before the resolution of thus punishing them was taken up; the which also was not at first peremptory and irreversible, but in God's design and desire it was revocable; for the world had a long reprieve after the sentence passed; execution was deferred till Noah's long preaching of righteousness, and denouncing of judgment in a manner so notorious and signal, (not by verbal declarations only, but by the visible structure of the ark,) could prevail nothing toward their amendment, but was either distrusted or disregarded, and perhaps derided by them. For, as St. Peter tells us, *they were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing;* that is, (as is collected by several interpreters from the text of the story,) during no less than one hundred and twenty years; a competent time for their recollecting 1 Pet. iii. 20. 2 Pet. ii. 5. Gen. vi. 3.

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themselves, and endeavouring by amendment of life to prevent the ruin threatened to come upon them. Yet notwithstanding that, this obstinate and incorrigible disobedience did so much displease God, as that in consideration thereof God is said to have *repented that he made man on the earth*, and to have been thereby grieved at the heart: yet did he so temper his anger as not utterly to destroy mankind, but provided against its total ruin, by preserving one family as a seminary thereof; preserving the father thereof (questionless by a special grace) from the spreading contagion, inspiring him with faith, and qualifying him for the favour, which by him he designed to communicate unto the world; the reparation thereof, and restoring the generations of men. So that also through this passage of providence, how dismal and dreadful soever at first sight, much goodness will be transparent to him that looks upon it attentively.

Gen. vi. 6.

III. In the next place, as to that extermination and excision of the Canaanites, which carries so horrible an appearance of severity, we may find it qualifiable, if we consider, that for the nature of the trespasses, which procured it, they were insufferably heinous and abominable: most sottish, barbarous, and base superstitions, (cruelty and impurity being essential ingredients into their performances of religion, and it being piety with them to be exceedingly wicked,) and in their other practice most beastly lasciviousnesses, most bloody violences, oppressions, and rapines generally abounding. So that for those men themselves, who were by turns, as it happened, the authors and the objects of these dealings, it could not be desirable to continue in a state of living so wretched and uncomfortable. Impunity had been no mercy to such people, but rather a cruelty; cutting them off must needs be the greatest favour they were capable of, it being only removing them from a hell here, and preventing their deserving many worse hells hereafter. Even to themselves it was a favour, and a greater one to their posterity, whom they might have brought forth to succeed into their courses, and to the consequences of them; whom they

Levit. xviii.

would have engaged into their wicked customs, and their woful mischiefs. They were not so destroyed from the land, until it grew uninhabitable in any tolerable manner, and itself could not, as it were, endure them any longer, but (as the text doth most significantly express it) *did spue them out;* being like a stomach surcharged with foul or poisonous matter, which it loathes, and is pained with, and therefore naturally labours to expel. Neither was this sad doom executed upon them till after four hundred years of forbearance; for even in Abraham's time God took notice of their iniquity, then born and growing; and gave account of his suspending their punishment; *because*, said he, *the iniquity of the Amorites* was not yet full, (that is, was not yet arrived to a pitch of desperate obstinacy and incorrigibility:) while there was the least glimpse of hope, the least relics of any reason, any regret, any shame in them, the least possibility of recovery, God stopped his avenging hand: but when all ground of hope was removed, the whole stock of natural light and strength was embezzled, all fear, all remorse, all modesty were quite banished away, all means of cure had proved ineffectual, the gangrene of vice had seized on every part, iniquity was grown mature and mellow; then was the stroke of justice indeed not more seasonable than necessary; then was the fatal sword the only proper remedy; then so with one stroke to cut off them, and their sins, and their mischiefs, and their miseries together, was an argument no less strong and clear of God's merciful goodness, than of his just anger toward them.

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Levit. xviii. 28.

Gen. xv. 16.

IV. The like account we may render of God's judgments upon the people of Israel. If we consult the Prophets, who declare the state of things, the facts, the dispositions, the guilts, that brought them down from heaven, we shall see, that they came upon account of an universal apostasy from both the faith and practice of true religion; *a deep corruption (like that in the days of Gibeah,* as the prophet Hosea speaketh) in mind and manners; an utter perverting of all truth and right; an obstinate compliance with, or emulation of, the most abominable practices

Hos. xi. 9.

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of the heathen nations about them; an universal apostasy, I say, from God and all goodness; a thorough prevalence of all iniquity. Hear the Prophets expressing it, and describing them. Jeremiah; *Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem; see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it.* Isaiah; *The earth is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant: Ah sinful nation! a people laden with iniquities, a seed of evil doers; children that are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger; they are gone away backward, &c.* Thus do these and other Prophets in a like strain describe in the gross the state of things preceding those judgments. And in Ezekiel (in divers places, particularly in the 8th, but especially in the 22d chapter) we have their offences in detail, and by parts (their gross impieties, their grievous cruelties, extortions, and oppressions) set out copiously, and in most lively colours. And as the quality of their provocations was so bad, and the extension of them so large, so was their condition desperate; there were no means of remedy left, no hopes of amendment; so was their forehead covered with impudence, their heart hardened with obstinacy, their minds deeply tinctured with habitual pravity and perverseness: *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil,* saith Jeremiah concerning them. All methods of reclaiming them had proved fruitless; no favourable dealings, no gentle admonition or kind instruction would avail any thing; for it is of them the prophet Isaiah saith, *Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn rightcousness.* No advices, no reproofs (how frequent, how vehement, how urgent soever) had any effect upon them. Almighty God declares often, that he had spoken unto them rising up early, but they would not hear nor regard his speech; did not only neglect, and refuse, but *despise, loathe, mock,*

Jer. v. 1.

Is. xxiv. 5. i. 4.

Ezek. xxii.

Jer. xiii. 23.

Isa. xxvi. 10.

Jer. xxv. 4. xxxii. 33. vi. 10.

and *reproach* it, (*turning their back upon him, pulling away their shoulder, stiffening their neck, and stopping their ears, that they should not hear ;*) *that he had spread out his hands all the day long to a rebellious and gainsaying people ; to a people that* (with extreme insolence and immodesty) *provoked him to anger continually to his face.* Nor could any tenders of mercy allure or move them: *I said,* (God said it in Jeremiah) *after all these thing, Turn unto me ; but she returned not. Amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the Lord your God, and the Lord will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin ;* and innumerable the like overtures we have of grace and mercy to them; all which they proudly and perversely rejected, persisting in their wicked courses; they even repelled and silenced, they rudely treated and persecuted the prophets sent unto them with messages of kind warning and overtures of grace ; so obstructing all access of mercy to themselves; *They say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things*: so Isaiah reports their proceeding. *Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute?* so St Stephen expostulates with them. Neither were gentler chastisements designed for their correction and cure anywise available; they made no impression on them, they produced no change in them: *In vain,* saith God, *I have smitten your children, they have received no correction.* And, *Thou hast smitten them, but they have not grieved ; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction ; they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return.* And, *The people turneth not to him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts.* Unto this καταρτισμὸς εἰς ἀπώλειαν, this perfect fitness, (as St. Paul speaketh,) this maturity of desperate and irrecoverable impiety, had that people grown, not at once, and on a sudden, but by continual steps of provocation, through a long course of time, during that divine patience sparing them, and by various expedients striving to recover them. This consideration

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Zech. vii. 11. Neh. ix. 29, 30. Isa. lxv. 2. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Jer. iii. 7. vii 3. iv. 1, 14 xviii. 11. xxvi. 13.

Jer. xi. 21. xxxii. 30. Matt. xxiii. 37. Ezek. xviii.

Isa. xxx. 10.

Acts vii. 52.

Isa. i. 16, 17, &c (Neh. ix. 29.) Jer. ii. 30.

Jer. v. 3.

Isa. ix. 13.

Rom. ix. 22.

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is frequently insisted upon, especially in the prophet Jeremiah: *The children of Israel and the children of Judah have only done evil before me from their youth. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day, I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early, and sending them; yet they hearkened not unto me*, &c. Well then, after so many hundred years of abused patience, and unsuccessful labour to reclaim them, it was needful that justice should have her course upon them: yet how then did God inflict it, with what mildness and moderation, with what pity and relenting? *Nevertheless*, say they in Nehemiah, *for thy great mercies sake thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art a gracious and merciful God.* And, *Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve*, doth Ezra confess. *I will not execute the fierceness of my anger*, doth God himself resolve and declare in Hosea. So mild he was as to the measure of his punishing; and what compassion accompanied it, those pathetical expressions declare: *My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him. In all their afflictions he was afflicted*, &c. We may add, that notwithstanding all these provocations of his wrath, and abusings of his patience, which thus necessitated God to execute his vengeance; yet even during the execution thereof, and while his hand was so stretched forth against them, he did retain thoughts of favour and intentions of doing good, even toward this so ingrateful, so insensible, so incorrigible a people: *For a small moment*, saith God, *have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee: I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.* Now these things being seriously laid together, have we not occasion and ground sufficient even in this instance, no less to admire and adore the wonderful benignity, mercy, and patience of God, than to dread and tremble at his justice?

Jer. xxxii. 30. vii. 25. xvi. 12. xi. 7.
Ezra ix. 7.
Neh. ix. 31.
Ezr. ix. 13.
Hos. ix. 9.
Hos xi. 8.
Jer. xxxi. 20.
Isa. lxiii. 9.
Isa. liv. 7.
Jer. xxix. 11. xxxiii. 6, 7.

V. As for the last so calamitous and piteous destruction of Jerusalem, with the grievous consequences thereof, as we might apply thereto the former considerations, so we shall only observe what was peculiar in that case; that God dispensed such means to prevent it, (to remove the meritorious causes thereof, obstinate impenitency and incredulity; resisting the truth by him sent from heaven with so clear a revelation and powerful confirmation; despising the Spirit of God, and the dictates of their own conscience; basely misusing divers ways, and at last cruelly murdering the Son of God;) such means, I say, God did employ for the removing those provocatives of vengeance, which, as our Lord himself saith, were sufficient to have converted Tyre and Sidon; yea, to have preserved Sodom itself; so that our Saviour could with a compassionate grief deplore the unsuccessfulness of his tender affection, and solicitous care for their welfare, in these passionate terms: *How often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathers her chickens under her wing .but ye would not!* That St. John the Baptist's sharp reproofs, his powerful exhortations, his downright and clear forewarnings of what would follow, *(Even now*, said he, *the axe is laid to the root of the tree,)* attended with so remarkable circumstances of his person and his carriage, (which induced all the world about him to regard him as no ordinary man, but a special instrument of God and messenger from heaven,) did yet find no effect considerable: the Pharisees and Lawyers, those corrupt guides, whose authority managed the blind multitude, *defeating the counsel of God toward themselves*, as St. Luke speaketh, (that is, defeating his gracious purpose of reclaiming them from disobedience, and consequently of withholding the judgments imminent,) they reviled the person of that venerable Prophet; *He hath a devil*, said they: they slighted his premonitions, and rejected his advices, by observing which, those dreadful mischiefs, which fell upon their rebellious heads, might have been averted. We may add, that even those fearful judgments were tempered with mixtures of favourable design, not only to the community

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Matt. xi. 21.

Matt. xxiii. 37.

Matt. iii. 10.

Luke vii 30.

Matt. xi. 18.

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of mankind, (which, by so remarkable a vengeance upon the persecutors of our Lord and the scorners of his doctrine, was converted unto, or confirmed in, the Christian faith,) but even toward that people whom it served to convince of their errors and crimes; to induce them to repentance, to provoke them unto the acknowledgment and embracing of God's truth, so palpably vindicated by him. So that I might here apply that passage of St. Paul, (if not directly and adequately according to his sense, yet with no incongruous allusion at least,) *Have they stumbled, that they should fall?* (or, was there no other design of God's judgments upon them, but their utter ruin?) μὴ γένοιτο· *No such matter; but through their fall salvation came to the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy* (or emulation.) And, in effect, as our Lord in the midst of his sufferings did affectionately pray for God's mercy upon them, as the Apostles did offer reconciliation unto them all indifferently, who would repent, and were willing to embrace it; so were such of them as were disposed to comply with those invitations, received to grace, how deeply soever involved in the continued guilt of those enormous persecutions, injuries, and blasphemies; as particularly St. Paul, that illustrious example of God's patience and mercy in this case. So that neither by this instance is any attribute of God more signalized, than his transcendent goodness, in like manner as by the former instances, and in analogy to them by all others, that may be assigned. By all of them it will appear that God is primarily and of himself disposed to do all fitting and possible good to men, not to inflict evil more than is fit and necessary; that God is indeed *optimus ex naturæ proprietate*, (*most good according to property of nature*,) although *justus ex causæ necessitate*, (*severe from the necessity of the case*,) as Tertullian speaketh. To afflict men (either some men singly, or whole societies of men) may be sometimes expedient upon several accounts; for vindicating the esteem, and supporting the interest of goodness, which may by impunity be disgraced, endamaged, endangered; for the discrimination of good and evil men, in an observable

Rom. xi. 11.

1 Tim. i. 16.

De Resurr. Carnis, c. 14.

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manner; for the encouragement and comfort of the good, the reduction and amendment of the bad; for preventing the contagion, and stopping the progress of iniquity, whereupon greater guilts and worse mischiefs would ensue[g]: it may be as necessary as sharp physic to cure public or private distempers; as an instrument of rousing us out of our sinful lethargies; as that which may cause us better to understand ourselves, and more to remember God; as a ground of fearing God, and an inducement to believe his providence. For those and many such purposes, to bring upon men things distasteful to sense may be very requisite; nor doth the doing it anywise prejudice the truth of divine goodness, but rather confirms it, commends it, and advances its just esteem. It would be a fond indulgence, not a wise kindness; a cruel, rather than a loving pity, to deal otherwise. In fine, we are to consider, that all the mischiefs we undergo, God doth not so much bring them on us, as we do pull them on ourselves[h]. They are αὐθαίρετα πήματα, *affected*, or *self-chosen mischiefs*; they are κακὰ βλαστήματα προαιρέσεως, *bad sprouts of our free choice*, as a Father calls them; they are, as another Father saith, ἑκουσίων κακῶν ἀκούσια ἔκγονα, *the unwilling offsprings of wilful evils*; they are the certain results of our own will, or the natural fruits of our actions; actions, which (however God desire, advise, command, persuade, entreat, excite) we do will, we are resolved to perform. *We in a manner*, as Salvian saith [i], *do force God to do whatever he doeth in this kind; violently plucking down vengeance on our own heads; compelling the kind and merciful Lord, against his nature and will, to afflict us; not so much as giving him leave to spare us.* God vehemently disclaims himself to be the original

Wisd. i. 12. Carm. Pythag. Cyril. Hier. Damasc.

Miseros nos si nec juranti Deo credimus. *Hier.*

[g] *Basil. Orat.* Quod Deus non est causa mali, eleganter et pulchre de hac re.

[h] Πάντα κινεῖ καὶ πραγματεύεται ὁ Θεὸς, ὥστε ἡμᾶς ἀπαλλάξαι κολάσεως, καὶ τιμωρίας. *Chrys.* tom. viii. p. 100.

[i] Nos vim Deo facimus iniquitatibus nostris; nos nolentem ulcisci cogimus. Deus enim pius et misericors est, et qui neminem velit perire, vel lædere, &c. *Salv.* lib. 5. et 8.

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cause; to design, (according to absolute or primary intention,) to desire, to delight in our grief, or our ruin. *As*

Ezek. xviii. 30. xxxiii. 11. *I live, saith the Lord,* (and surely when God swears, we may believe that he is very serious,) *I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his*

Deut. xxx. 19. *way, and live. I call heaven to record this day against you, that I have set life and death before you: therefore choose*

Lam. iii. 33. *life. He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. He would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. He would not have any*

Wisd. i. 13. *perish, but that all should come to repentance. He made not death, nor hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living.* God then, if we may believe him, is not the first author of our calamities. Who then? He tells us him-

Hos. xiii. 9. xiv. 1. Jer. v. 25. Isa. lxiv. 6. Matt. xxiii. 37. self: *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself: thou hast fallen by thine own iniquity. Your sins have withholden good things from you. Our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. How often would I have gathered you, but ye would not!* The designs and the endeavours of God do tend to our welfare and salvation; it is our will and our

Wisd. i. 12. actions which only procure our ruin: *It is we,* that, as the Wise Man saith, *seek death in the error of our life, and pull upon our own selves destruction.* So that, to conclude this part of our discourse, even those passages of providence, which at first glimpse appear most opposite or disadvantageous to the goodness of God [k], (or to our opinion and belief concerning it,) do, being well sifted, nowise prejudice it, but rather serve to corroborate and magnify it.

I shall only farther briefly touch (or rather but mention) the uses and effects, to the producing which, the consideration of God's goodness, in so manifold ways declared, should be applied.

1. It should beget in us hearty love and reverence toward God, in regard to this attribute so excellent and

[k] St. Chrysostom in divers places doth insist upon the goodness of God in making and threatening hell itself.

Τῆς βασιλείας οὐκ ἔλαττον, ἡ τῆς γεέννης ἀπειλὴ δείκνυσιν αὐτῷ τὴν ἀγαθότητα, &c. Ἀνδρ. ζ.

amiable in itself, so beneficial and advantageous to us. What can we esteem, what can we love, if so admirable goodness doth not affect us? How prodigiously cold and hard is that heart, which cannot be warmed and softened into affection by so melting a consideration! SERM. LXIX.

2. It should produce, as grateful sense in our hearts, so real endeavours of thankful obedience in our lives. It should make us *walk worthy of God, to all well-pleasing, bringing forth fruit in every good work;* taking heed of doing as did Hezekiah, of whom it is said, that *he rendered not according to the benefit done unto him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore was wrath upon him;* that we may not have that expostulation justly applied unto us, *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?* Col. i. 10. 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. Deut. xxxii 6.

3. It should engage us the more to fear God; complying with the Prophet's admonition, *Fear the Lord and his goodness:* considering that intimation of the Psalmist, *There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared;* observing that advice of Samuel, *Only fear the Lord and serve him; for consider what great things he hath done for you.* For that indeed nothing is more terrible than goodness slighted, and patience abused. Hos. iii. 5. Psal. cxxx. 4. 1 Sam. xii. 24.

4. It should humble, ashame, and grieve us, for having crossed and offended such exceeding goodness and mercy. It should cause us greatly to detest our sins, which lie under so heinous an aggravation; to be deeply displeased with ourselves, who have so unworthily committed them.

5. It should therefore render us wary and vigilant against the commission of any sin; that is, of incurring the guilt of so enormous ingratitude and baseness; making us cautious of doing like those, of whom it is confessed in Nehemiah; *They did eat, and were filled, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness: nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy laws behind their back.* Neh. ix. 25, 26.

6. It should also breed and nourish in us faith and hope in God. For what reason can we have to distrust of so great goodness; that he will refuse to help us in our need;

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that he will fail in accomplishment of his promises; that he will withhold what is convenient for us? It should preserve us from despair. What temptation can we have to despair of mercy, if we heartily repent of our misdoings, and sincerely endeavour to please him?

Vid Chrys. ad Theod. ii. tom. 6. p. 63. optime et fusc. Matt. vii. 11.

7. It should upon the same account excite us to a free and constant exercise of all devotions. For why should we be shy or fearful of entering into so friendly and favourable a presence? why should we be backward from having (upon any occasion or need) a recourse to him, who is so willing, so desirous, so ready to do us good? what should hinder us from delighting in oblations of blessing and praise unto him?

8. It ought to render us submissive, patient, and contented under God's hand, of correction, or trial, as knowing that it cannot be without very just cause, that such goodness seemeth displeased with us; that we are the chief causes of our suffering, or our want; so that we can have no good cause to repine, or complain; for, *Wherefore doth the living man complain? since a man* (suffers) *for the punishment of his sins;* since it is *our sins that withhold good things from us;* since also we considering this attribute may be assured, that all God's dispensations do aim and tend to our good.

Lam. iii. 39.

Jer. v. 25.

9. It should also, in gratitude toward God, and imitation of him, engage us to be good, kind, and bountiful, placable, and apt to forgive; meek and gentle, pitiful, and affectionate toward our brethren; *to be good and merciful, as our heavenly Father is merciful and benign even* toward the wicked and ungrateful; to be *kind unto one another, full of bowels, forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.*

Luke vi. 35, 36. 1 John iii. 16. Coloss. iii. 13. Eph. iv. 32.

10. Lastly, we ought to have an especial care of perverting this excellent truth by mistakes and vain presumptions; that we *do not turn the grace of God into wantonness*, or occasion of licentious practice. Because God is very good and merciful, we must not conceive him to be fond, or slack, or careless; that he is apt to indulge us in sin, or to connive at our presumptuous transgression

Jude 4.

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of his laws. No; ἕπεται τῷ ἀγαθῷ, ἡ ἀγαθὸν, ἡ μισοπονηρία, (*the hatred of wickedness is consequent upon goodness even as such*, as Clemens Alexandrinus saith,) God, even as he is good, cannot but detest that which is opposite and prejudicial to goodness; he cannot but maintain the honour and interest thereof; he cannot, he will not endure us to dishonour him, to wrong our neighbour, to spoil ourselves. As he is a sure friend to us as his creatures, so he is an implacable enemy to us as impenitent rebels and apostates from our duty. *The wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth.* Psal. xi. 5. As he is infinitely benign, so he is also perfectly *holy, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.* Hab. i. 13. *He is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with him. The foolish shall not stand in his sight; he hateth all workers of iniquity. His face is against them that do evil.* Psal. v. 4, 5. Psal. xxxiv. 16. Finally, as God is gracious to all such as are capable of his love, and qualified for his mercy; so he is an impartial and upright Judge, who will deal with men according to their deserts, according to the tenor of his laws and ordinances; according to his immutable decree and word: so that as we have great reason to trust and hope in him, so we have no true ground to presume upon him, vainly to trifle, or insolently to dally with him.

But I leave this point to be farther improved by your meditations.

Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears, may through thy grace be so grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living, to the honour and praise of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERMON LXX.

NO RESPECT OF PERSONS WITH GOD.

ROM. ii. 11.

For there is no respect of persons with God.

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IT is an ordinary conceit, grounded on a superficial view of things, that Almighty God dispenseth his gifts with great inequality, and dealeth very partially with men; being lavish in his bounty to some, but sparing therein to others; slack and indulgent in calling some to account, but rigorous and severe in judgment toward others.

Which imagination often hath influence upon the affections and the actions of men; so that hence some men do highly presume, others are much discouraged: some are apt to boast themselves special darlings and favourites of Heaven; others are tempted to complain of their being quite deserted, or neglected thereby.

Ps. lxxiii. 6.

But whoever more carefully will observe things, and weigh them with good consideration, shall find this to be a great mistake; and that in truth God distributeth his favours with very equal measures: he poiseth the scales of justice with a most even hand; so that reasonably no man should be exalted, no man should be dejected in mind, upon account of any considerable difference in God's regard towards him, and other persons; the which is clearly discovered by God, or merely dependeth on his will and providence.

Job xxxi. 6.

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The advantages, which one man hath above another, being estimated morally, in reference to solid felicity and content, are indeed none; or are not absolutely made by God, but framed by men unto themselves. For,

God is indifferently affected towards persons as such, nakedly and privately considered; or as divested of moral conditions, qualifications, and actions: he in his dealing, whether as benefactor or judge, purely considereth the reason and exigency of things, the intrinsic worth of persons, the real merits of each cause; he maketh no arbitrary or groundless discriminations; he neither loveth and favoureth, nor loatheth and discountenanceth any person unaccountably: he doth utterly disclaim partiality, or respect of persons, as a calumnious aspersion on him, and a scandal to his providence.

Such in holy Scriptures he representeth himself, upon various occasions; declaring his perfect impartiality, and that nothing beside the right and reason of cases doth sway with him; all other considerations being impertinent and insignificant to him. For instance,

It is declared, that he hath no partial respect to nations; for the piety of Job, an Edomite; of Melchisedeck, a Canaanite; of Jethro, a Midianite; were very pleasing to him: he favourably did hear the prayers and accept the alms of Cornelius a Roman soldier; whereupon St. Peter made this general reflection: *Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.* (Rom. x. 12. iii. 29.) Acts x. 34. 35.

He is declared not to regard the external profession of true religion, but real practice according to it: *He rendereth*, saith St. Paul, *to every man according to his deeds—tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile: for*, addeth the Apostle, assigning the reason of this proceeding, *there is no respect of persons with God.* (Gal. v. 6. vi. 15. iii. 28.) Col. iii. 11. Rom. ii. 6, 9, 10, 11. (x. 12. iii. 29.)

He is said not *to respect faces*, or any exterior appear-

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ances, however specious in the eye of the world; according to that saying of God to Samuel, at the choice of David before his brethren; *Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature, because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance; but the Lord looketh on the heart.*

1 Sam. xvi. 7.

It is expressed, that he hath no respect to the outward estate or worldly rank and dignity of men; but that princes and peasants, masters and servants, the honourable or wealthy, and the mean or poor, are of equal consideration with him; *He*, saith Job, *accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of his hands;* and St. Paul biddeth masters to deal fairly with their servants, *knowing*, saith he, *that your Master is also in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.*

Job xxxiv. 19. Wisd. vi. 7. Eph. vi. 9. Coloss. iii. 25. iv. 1.

We are taught, that he doth not regard even the most sacred offices, or more worthy accomplishments of men, in prejudice to the verity of things, or equity of the case; for hence St. Paul maintaineth his resolute behaviour toward those great pillars of religion, St. Peter and St. James; *Of those who seemeth to be somewhat, whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person.*

Gal. ii. 6.

It is frequently inculcated, that he hath no consideration of any gifts, of sacrifices, of services presented to him with sinister intent, to compound for sin, or excuse from duty, to pervert justice, or palliate wrong; according to that [declaration of Moses, *The Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward;* and that] charge of king Jehoshaphat to his judges, *Let the fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed, and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.* And, *Do not think*, saith the Hebrew wise man, *to corrupt* (him) *with gifts; for such he will not receive; and trust not to unrighteous sacrifices; for the Lord is judge, and with him is no respect of persons.*

Deut. x. 17. 2 Chron. xix. 7. Ecclus. xxxv. 12. (Isa. i. 3. lxi. 8. lxvi. 3. Prov. xv. 8. xxi. 27. Amos v. 21, 22.

Jer. vi. 20. Mic. vi. 7, 8. Hos. vi. 6.) Rom. ii. 11.

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In fine, it is often generally declared, that God impartially dispenseth recompenses, in just proportion, according to the deeds of men: *He*, saith St. Paul, *that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons: And if*, saith St. Peter, *ye call upon the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.* Col. iii. 25. 1 Pet. i. 17.

There is nothing more frequently asserted, or more seriously urged in holy Scripture, than this point, that God will judge and deal with men, not according to his absolute, antecedent affections, but *according to their own works*, or the tenor of their practice, duly scanned and estimated by the rules of justice; so that the really better man will certainly prove the happier, and the worse man shall be the more wretched: *He will reward every man*, saith our Lord, κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν αὐτοῦ, *according to his practice: Every one*, saith St. Paul, *shall receive the things done in his body*, πρὸς τὰ ἔργα, *suitably*, (in just proportion) *to his works*; and *each man shall receive* ἴδιον μισθὸν, *his own wages according to his own labour; and then praise* (or a due taxation) *shall be to every man from God: Behold*, saith he in the Revelation, *I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to recompense each man* ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ ἔργον ἔσται, *as his work shall be.* Matth. xvi. 27. Rom. ii. 6. Rev. ii. 23. xx. 12. 2 Cor. v. 10. 1 Cor. iii. 8. (Jer. xvii. 10. xxxii. 19. Ps. lxii. 12.) 1 Cor. iv. 5. Rev. xxii. 12. Ἀποδοῦναι ἑκάστῳ.

Wherefore by sacred testimonies it is abundantly manifest, that impartiality is a divine attribute and perfection of God; the which (for our greater satisfaction, and farther illustration of the point) may be also evinced by divers arguments, some proving that it must be so, others shewing that it is so; some inferring it *a priori*, from the prime, most avowed attributes of God's nature, and from his relations to men; others arguing it *a posteriori*, from principal instances of God's proceedings and providential dispensations toward men.

Of the first sort are these:

1. God is impartial, because he is perfectly wise, and thence doth truly estimate persons and things.

Wisdom doth look evenly, with a free and pure (an in-

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different and uncorrupt) eye upon all things; apprehending and esteeming each as it is in itself; making no distinction where it findeth none; not preferring one thing before another, without ground of difference in them. It doth not fix a valuation on its objects, but acknowledgeth it, and taketh it for such as it is in themselves.

Wherefore God cannot have any blind affection or fondness toward any person grounded on no reason, or upon any unaccountable prejudice. No person can seem amiable or odious to him, who is not in himself truly such.

This argument is often used in Scripture; and to assure us of this truth, it is there frequently affirmed, that God doth search the hearts, doth try the spirits, doth weigh the actions of men: *The Lord*, said Hannah, *is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed: All the ways of man*, saith Solomon, *are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits: His eyes*, saith the Psalmist, *behold, his eyelids try the children of men:* And, *O Lord of hosts*, saith Jeremiah, *that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart——Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings:* [*I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*]

1 Sam. ii. 3. Prov. xvi. 2. Psal. xi. 4. Jer. xi. 20. xx. 12. Jer. xxxii. 19. Jer. xvii. 10.

2. God cannot be partial, because he is perfectly righteous, just, and holy. This reason adjoined to the former doth make up a complete demonstration: for partiality doth proceed either from blindness of mind, or from perverseness of will; he, therefore, who hath both an exact knowledge of things, and a perfect rectitude of will, can nowise be partial; the one enabling him to judge, the other disposing him to affect things as they are and deserve; to esteem and love that which is indeed worthy and lovely; to despise and dislike that which is despicable and odious; to have no opinion or affection toward a person, abstracted from all qualifications; such an one being no special object of a wise and just either esteem or contempt, love or hatred.

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As these causes are always inseparably connected, (for what is justness, but a disposition of will to follow, without deflection, the dictates of wisdom?) so the effect must necessarily follow; according to numberless testimonies in Scripture, importing that *The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth: The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous— but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.* Psal. xi. 7. (vii. 11. xxxiii. 5. xlv. 7. cxlvi. 8.) Psal. xi. 5.

3. God is impartial, because he is infinitely great and potent; whence all creatures are in the same degree inferior, at the same distance remote from him; all are equally at his discretion and disposal; he hath no need of any: what therefore should incline him to regard one before another, excepting only goodness, wherein he delighteth? So the Wise Man discourseth, *He that is Lord of all shall fear no man's person, neither shall he stand in awe of any man's greatness; for he hath made the small and great, and careth for all alike.* So Moses did imply, *The Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of Lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons.* v. 5. Psal. xxxiv. 15, 16. Wisd. vi. 7. Deut. x. 17.

4. God is impartial, because he is immensely good and benign; both intensively in the degree, and extensively as to the objects of his goodness; so that he favoureth all equally, because all thoroughly, so far as may well be according to their condition and capacity; whence if there be any difference or defect, the ground thereof is not in his nature or will, but in the different qualifications of creatures. Exod. xxiv 6, 7. Numb. xiv. 18. Ps. lxxxvi. 5, 15. ciii. 8. cxlv. 8.

There is a double goodness or love of God; one absolute, preceding all regard to personal qualities, or deeds; the other conditionate, and consequent on special regards: in both these God is impartial; for the first is general and unconfined, according to that of the Psalmist, *The Lord is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works;* and those sayings in the Gospel, *He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil: He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.* Ps. cxlv. 9, 16. Luke vi. 35. Matt. v. 45.

The second is grounded on special reasons of the case, and

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adapted to the rules of justice demanding it; according whereto, *The Lord is rich* (in mercy) *toward all that call upon him. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him, and preserveth all them that love him.*

Rom. x. 12. Ps. cxlv. 18. xxxiv. 15. cxlv. 19, 20. xxxiv. 9. xxxiii. 18.

In the first there is no difference; in the second the difference is made by ourselves, being founded in our voluntary demeanour.

5. God is impartial toward all persons, because he hath the same (natural and original) relations toward all.

1. He is the maker and father of all; according to that of the prophet, *Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?* and that of the Apostle, There *is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all:* he therefore hath the same parental kindness toward all, the same tenderness for the good of each; he is not capable of that imperfection, which is observable in some parents, to be fond and indulgent to some children above others; but in his affection *the rich and poor*, as the Wise Man saith, *do meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.*

Mal. ii. 10. Eph. iv. 6. Prov. xxii. 2.

Hence Job did collect that *God accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for*, saith he, *they are all the work of his hands.*

Job xxxiv. 19.

Hence the same holy man did infer, that he was obliged to deal fairly with his own servants, for that God in judgment would consider their case no less than his, upon this account, for, *Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?*

Job xxxi. 13, 14, 15. Job xxxi. 15.

Hence the Wise Man, who imitated Solomon, did argue an equality of gracious providence toward all; *He hath made the small and the great, and careth for all alike.*

Wisd. vi. 7.

2. God is the common Lord of all; and therefore is concerned to protect all with the like care, to govern all with the same equity.

Hence St. Paul gathereth, that God is indifferently willing to shew mercy and dispense blessings to all people; to confer the means of salvation, and to accept pious endeavours, without distinction of Jew or Gentile: *Is he*, saith he, *the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the*

Rom. iii. 29.

Gentiles? And, *There is therefore no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.* SERM. LXX. Rom. x. 12.

Hence the same Apostle doth urge masters to be just and kind to their servants; for that God, as the common master, hath an equal respect to both; *knowing that your Master also is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.* Eph. vi. 9.

3. God is *the Saviour of all;* desiring and designing that *all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth*; being *willing that no man should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* 1 Tim. iv. 10. ii. 4. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

Wherefore out of philanthropy and love to mankind, he sent his Son to be *the Saviour of the world*; to *give himself a ransom for all men*, to *taste death for every man.* Tit. ii. 11. 1 John iv. 14.

And what greater instance could there be of perfect impartiality? Luke ix. 56. John iii. 17. xii. 47. 2 Cor. v. 19. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Heb. ii. 9.

So by reasons from the principal attributes and relations of God his impartiality may be deduced: the same also may be declared from his proceedings and dealings with men. For,

1. God hath proposed to all men indifferently the same terms and conditions of obtaining his love and favour, of enjoying his bounty and mercy, of obtaining rewards and felicity from him. Clem. Pæd. i. 4.

The same laws and rules of life are prescribed to all persons, as men, and as Christians.

The natural dictates of reason, the precepts of holy Scripture, the great moral duties of religion, by observance whereof God's favour is retained, and salvation assured, are of general concern and common obligation to all without exception.

God hath not framed one Law, or one Gospel, for princes and great men, another for peasants and mean artisans; he hath not chalked out one way toward heaven for the rich, another for the poor to walk in; but all, *high and low, rich and poor, one with another*, are tied to observe the precepts of piety, of charity, of justice, of temperance, sobriety and chastity, of modesty, humility, Psal. xlix. 2.

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and patience; none, great or small, can otherwise, than by proceeding in the common road of virtuous practice, arrive to happiness. *He that doeth the will of my Father that is in heaven, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.* *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments: Enter in through the strait gate: Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life: To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek glory and honour and immortality, eternal life* will be conferred: these are the grand infallible maxims, the fixed irreversible decrees, expressing the general duty and doom of mankind, according to the eternal reason of things, and the declared will of God Almighty, our sovereign governor and judge.

Matth. vii. 21.

Matth. xix. 17. vii. 13. Luke xiii. 24. Psal. xxxiv. 12. Rev. xxii. 14. Rom. ii. 7.

Whoever it is, that will please God, that will have his love, that will be happy by his grace, must humbly submit to God's will, must faithfully obey God's laws, must carefully walk in God's way; from this course there can be no exemption, no dispensation, no special privilege for any person whatever.

John xv. 14.

As all men naturally, by indissoluble bands of obligation, are the subjects and servants of God; so God indispensably and inexcusably doth require the same loyalty and fidelity, the same diligence, the same reverence from all.

Great men sometimes may live, as if they conceited themselves free from the obligations which bind other men; as if they had not souls (as we poor mortals have) to be saved, or were to be saved in some other way; as if obedience to the divine laws doth not touch them, but only doth belong to the commonalty; as if they had special indulgence to live in pride, luxury, and sloth, might warrantably practise injustice, oppression, revenge; might *cum privilegio* be lewd and lascivious, withhold their debts, take God's name in vain, neglect devotion and the service of God: but in thus doing they much abuse themselves; for they no less than others are obnoxious to guilt and to punishment, for such misdemeanors against the divine laws. In truth, if there be any difference in the case,

it is only this; that they, in all equity, ingenuity, and gratitude, are obliged to a more strict, more faithful, more dilligent observance of God's laws; they being more indebted to God for his special bounty to them; they having larger talents and advantages committed to their trust, their deportment being of higher consequence, and most influential on the world, they being liable to render an account according to that just rule, *Unto whom much is given, of him much shall be required;* whence their eminency of condition doth not excuse them from common duties, but doth advance their obligation, will aggravate their neglect, will inflame their reckoning, will plunge them deeper into woful punishment; according to that of the Wise Man, *A sharp judgment shall be to them that are in high places; for mercy will soon pardon the meanest, but mighty men shall be mightly tormented.*

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Luke xii. 48.

Wisd. vi. 5, 6.

2. All persons have the same means, the same aids, the same supports afforded to them, for ability to perform their duty, and attain their happiness.

The word of God, as the light of heaven, doth indifferently shine to all men, for instructing their minds, for directing their practice, for *guiding their feet in the way of peace.*

The divine grace is ever at hand, ready to assist all those who sincerely and seriously do apply themselves to serve God.

Seasonable comforts are never wanting to support those who need them, and who in their distress seek them from God, who *healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds;* so that when *the poor man crieth, the Lord heareth him, and saveth him out of his troubles.*

Ps. cxlvii. 3. (cxlvi. 7.) Ps xxxiv. 6.

The universal good Spirit of God (the fountain of light and wisdom, of spiritual power and strength, of consolation and joy) is communicated according to the needs of men, and exigencies of occasion; preventing them by direction to the right way, by reclaiming them from ill courses, by exciting in them good thoughts and good desires; quickening their good resolutions, and assisting in the pursuit of them; enabling them to resist temptations, and to combat

1 Cor. xii. 7.

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with their spiritual adversaries: to such best purposes the holy Spirit is given to all in needful seasons and measures; especially to those who do earnestly seek it, do faithfully use it, do treat it well.

Luke xi. 13.

3. God hath provided, and doth propose to all men the same encouragements for obedience, the same punishments for transgression; the which being the same in kind do only differ in degree, proportionably to the good deeds or bad demerits of persons.

God hath appointed one heaven for all pious and virtuous persons, of what nation, of what rank, of what condition soever they are; he hath *prepared those things, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart of man conceived, for all that love him.* For *all* that have *fought the good fight*, and *kept the faith*, and *love his appearance, the Lord, the righteous Judge, hath laid up a crown of righteousness.*

Col. iii. 11. 1 Cor. ii. 9.

2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

Immortality of life, an unfading crown of glory, a kingdom that cannot be shaken, unspeakable joys, endless bliss, God hath covenanted and promised to all his faithful servants; to all who in his way please to accept and embrace them; ὁ θέλων, *He that willeth, let him take of the water of life freely*; and what greater rewards could there be assigned? What room is there for partiality, where all are capable of the same equally great, because in a manner immense felicity? *Many*, saith our Saviour, *shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down with Abraham, and with Isaac, and with Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.*

Luke xxii. 29.

Rev. xxii. 17.

Matt. viii. 11. Luke xiii. 29.

Lazarus, the poor beggar, shall rest with the illustrious Moses, and the noble Daniel, with David, and Hezekiah, and Josiah, and all pious princes, in the bosom of Abraham. The poor fishermen, the painful tent-makers, the sorry publicans, shall reign together with Constantine, and Theodosius, and all those good princes, who have faithfully served God, and promoted his glory. The rich, well using their wealth, may obtain that state, *treasuring up to themselves a good foundation against the time to come,*

1 Tim. vi. 19. Luke xii. 33. xvi. 9.

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that they may lay hold on eternal life: the poor, contentedly bearing their condition, have a good title thereto, expressed in those words, *Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.* Luke. vi. 20.

On the other hand, the same dismal punishments are threatened to all presumptuous, contumacious, and impenitent transgressors of God's law, however dignified or distinguished; be they princes or subjects, noble or base, wealthy or indigent; the same unquenchable fire, the same gnawing worm, the same weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; the same utter darkness; the same burning lake of brimstone; the same extreme disconsolate anguish is reserved for them all: *Depart from me; Go ye cursed into everlasting fire*, will be the doom pronounced on *all the workers of iniquity; Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, will be upon every soul that doeth evil.* Matt. vii. 23. xxv. 41. Luke xiii. 27. Rom. ii. 8, 9.

No regard will be had to the quality of men in this world; for *the rich man*, who *was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day*, was not excused from *hell* and *torment:* there is a *Tophet ordained of old, even for kings; mighty men shall be mightily tormented,* if they have mightily sinned. Luke xvi. 19, 23. Jam. v. 1. Luke vi. 24. Is. xxx. 33. Wisd. vi. 6.

Even present encouragements of virtue in this life, the joys and comforts of God's holy Spirit, the sweet elapses of spiritual consolation in devotion, *the peace of God*, and delicious sense of his love, the cheerful satisfaction of a good conscience, the *joy in believing* God's truth, and hoping for accomplishment of his promises, the delight in obeying God's commandments, the blessing of God upon good undertakings, and happy success therein, the *cooperation of all things for good to them who love God*, the supply of all wants, and satisfaction of all desires, the experimental assurance of God's constant protection and gracious providence over those who fear him and trust in him, (according to numberless declarations and promises in holy Scripture,) are indifferently dispensed to all, who shall use the means to attain them, in way of conscientious practice. Ps. xxxvii. 4, 5. i. 3. Rom. viii. 28. Ps. cxlv. 19. xxxvii. 4. xxxiv. 10.

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As correspondently the temporal discouragements from sin (crosses, disappointments, vexations, miseries) are without exception allotted to all transgressors of God's law, according to many denunciations therein.

Ps. xi. 6. lxxiii. 19. xxxii. 10. Isa. xlviii. 22. lvii. 20. liv. 17.

4. The impartiality of God doth appear from his universal providence, carefully watching over all and every person, dispensing good things to each, according to his need, without distinction [a].

Is any man in extreme want? his liberal hand presently doth reach forth a supply; for, *He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness; He openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing.*

Ps. cvii. 9. Ps. cxlv. 16.

Is any man in distress? the Lord is ready to afford relief; according to that repeated burden of the 107th Psalm: *Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.*

Ps. cvii. 6, 13, 19, 28. xxxiv. 6. cxlvi. 7. cxlvii. 6. ciii. 8. cvi. 8, 44. lxxviii. 38.

Is any man engaged in sin and guilt? He is patient and long-suffering; not pouring forth his anger, not withholding his mercies; letting his sun arise and his showers descend upon the most unworthy and ungrateful: this he doth so generally, that commonly by apparent events it is not easily discernible to whom God beareth special favour; according to that observation of the Preacher, *No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them; all things* coming *alike to all.* How then can any man complain of partiality in him, who exerciseth so unconfined bounty, clemency, and patience?

Eccl ix. 1, 2.

If there be any considerable difference, it is only this, that God hath a peculiar care of the poor, the afflicted, the oppressed, the helpless and disconsolate, who do most need (and thence are most induced to seek) his succour and comfort; being also commonly better qualified to receive them; as is frequently declared in Scripture.

Ps. cxlvi. 9. cxlvii. 14. ix. 9. xxxiv. 18. Is. xxv. 4.

It is true, that God hath his particular friends, his favourites, his privados, whom he doth specially regard and

[a] Bonus omnipotens ita curat universos tanquam singulos, ita singulos tanquam solos. *Aug. Conf.*

countenance; upon whom he conferreth extraordinary boons and graces; namely, those who do love, who do fear, who do trust in, who do honour him, who do obey him; concerning whom it is said, *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God:* and, *The Lord preserveth all those those that love him: There is no want to them that fear him: He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry, and will save them: The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants, and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate: Them that honour me, I will honour: The Lord loveth the righteous: The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry: Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* SERM. LXX. Rom. viii. 28. Ps. cxlv. 20. xxxi. 23. xxxiv. 9. cxlv. 19. xxxiv. 22. 1 Sam. ii. 30. Ps. cxlvi. 8. xxxiv. 15. John xv. 14.

But evidently there is no partiality in this; for he doth not favour them irrespectively as persons, but as in justice specially qualified for favour; friendship, dutifulness, reverence toward him, being the highest virtues, and arguing a mind endued with dispositions (with equity, with ingenuity, with gratitude, with sober wisdom, with love of truth and goodness) which demand a correspondence of love and respect from God himself. And as we do not hold a man partial who beareth a special affection and regard to those, who express good-will, who deal kindly and fairly with them, who serve them faithfully, and pay them due respect; so neither is God partial, if he doth specially bless good men upon the like accounts.

Especially considering, that God doth not so favour mere pretenders, who profess to love and honour him, but do not love true goodness; fond, superstitious, hypocritical people, who *call, Lord, Lord,* but practise iniquity; who think to please him by affected services; who court and flatter him with their lips; who would bribe him with their gifts and sacrifices. Matt. vii. 22. Luke vi. 46. Tit. i. 16. Matt. xv. 9. Col. ii. 22.

5. All Christians, without distinction, have the same illustrious relations and honourable privileges, the most great and glorious that can be imagined. Matt. xv. 8.

Of what greater honour is a man capable, than to be

SERM. LXX. adopted into the blood royal of heaven, *to be called* to be one of the sons of God? *Ye are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, that he might redeem us*—and *that we might receive the adoption of sons.*

(Col. iii. 11.). 1 Cor. xii. 13. Gal. iii. 26, 28. iv. 4, 5. Rom. viii. 14. 1 John iii. 1. John i. 12. Gal. iv.

Ἰδετε ποταπὴν ἀγάπην *Behold*, saith St. John, *what love the Father hath given us, that we should be called the sons of God.* This is a *privilege* which God hath given, which Christ hath purchased for us all. And *whosoever received him*, he gave *them* ἐξουσίαν ταύτην, (this power, this privilege, this advantage,) *that they should become the sons of God.*

To what higher dignity can any one pretend, than to be heir of a kingdom, by the most infallible assurance that can be; by covenant, by promise of God? Such are all good Christians, God's children; for *if sons, then heirs*, saith the Apostle, *heirs of God, coheirs with Christ:* heirs of God's kingdom; for, *Hearken, my beloved brethren*, saith St. James; *Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him?*

Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 7. Tit. iii. 7. Heb. i. 14. Jam. ii. 5.

Matt. xxv. 34. Luke xii. 32. Luke xxii. 29.

Inherit the kingdom prepared for you.

Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you a kingdom.

I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.

To what higher pitch can the most ambitious soul aspire than to be a king?

Such, St. John saith, that our Lord hath constituted every good Christian; *partakers*, not of a carnal, an earthly, a temporal kingdom, (which is unstable, is subject to various chances and crosses, cannot endure long, or last any considerable time,) but of a spiritual, a celestial, an eternal kingdom, *which cannot be shaken;* which hath continual rest, peace, joy.

Rev. 1. 6, 9. v. 10. 2 Tim. iv. 18. ἐπουράνιος. 2 Pet. i. 11. αἰώνιος. Heb. xii. 28. ἀσάλευτος. 1 Thess. ii. 12. Col. i. 13.

We are by God *called unto* his kingdom and glory,—*translated into the kingdom of his own dear Son.*

To be the brethren of Christ; who is the sovereign *Lord of glory, King of kings, and Lord of lords.*

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Is it not a considerable honour to be the friends of our Lord? So is every poor soul, which hath the conscience to serve him faithfully; for *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* John xv. 14.

All are citizens, free denizens of the heavenly commonwealth; συμπολῖται τῶν ἁγίων——. Phil. iii 20. Heb. xiii. 20. xii. 22.

6. All men are liable to the same judgment, at the same tribunal, before that one impartial, inflexible Judge, who cannot be corrupted with gifts, or dazzled with shows, or moved by any sinister regards. Eph. ii. 19. Deut. x. 17. (Col. iii. 25.)

All persons must stand before that bar upon equal ground; without any advantage; according to that representation of St. John; *I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened—and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.* Apoc. xx. 12.

The greatest monarchs, the mightiest potentates, the most redoubtable warriors, and successful conquerors, (the *men, who made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms,*) *that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof;* who affected *to ascend into heaven, and to exalt his throne above the stars of God, to ascend above the heights of the clouds, and to be like the Most High.* Is. xiv. 16, 17. v. 13, 14. (v. 11.)

There shall they stand bare and divested of all their phantastry; their splendid pomp, their numerous retinue, their guards, their parasites.

No consideration there will be had of their windy titles, of their gay attire, and glittering pomp.

No respect will be had to the dread of their name, to the fame of their prowess; to that spurious glory, for which they unsettled mankind, and overturned the world; their actions will be strictly scanned according to the rules of God's law and common equity.

They will be put to answer for all the violences and outrages, for all the spoils and rapines, for all the blood and slaughters, for all the ruins, devastations, and desolations, their cruel ambition hath caused; for all the sins they have committed, and all the mischiefs they have done.

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They who now have so many flatterers and adorers, will not then find one advocate to plead for them.

Thus it may appear that God is impartial.

But there are divers obvious exceptions against this doctrine. As,

Obj. 1. Is it not apparent that the gifts of God are distributed with great inequality?

Doth not one swim in wealth and plenty, while another coucheth under the burden of extreme want and penury?

Are not some perched aloft in high dignity, while others crawl upon the ground, and grovel in despicable meanness?

Luke xvi. 19, 20.

Are not some *clothed with purple and fine linen, and fare deliciously every day;* while others scarce finds rags to cover them, and *lie at the door* begging for relief?

Do not some thrive and prosper in their affairs, while others are disappointed and crossed in their undertakings?

Psal. xvii. 10. lxxiii. 7. Job xxi. 7. —xii. 6. Jer. xii. 1. Hab. i. 16. 1 Cor. iv. 7.

Was it not truly observed of some persons, (and those least deserving good fortune,) *They are inclosed in their own fat—Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish?*

And whence doth this difference come, but from God's hand? *Who*, as the Apostle asketh, *maketh thee to differ* from another, but God, the disposer of all things?

To this exception I answer:

Rom. viii. 18. Λογίζομαι γὰρ ὅτι οὐκ ἄξια— 2 Cor. iv. 17.

1. That temporal things are so inconsiderable, that they scarce deserve to come into the balance, or to be computed; for they have but the same proportion to spiritual things, as time hath to eternity; or a finite to an infinite; which is none at all.

What partiality therefore is there, if God in mercy and patience bestow on bad men a farthing in the temporal *consolations* of this life, (if the universal Father give a small *portion in this life* to untoward children,) while he reserveth infinite millions for his obedient children?

Luke vi. 24. xvi. 25. Ps. xvii. 14.

2. The goods of fortune commonly are dispensed not by a special hand of God, but according to the general course of providence: and what partiality is he guilty of who scattereth money into a crowd of poor people; al-

though in scrambling some get more than other; and often the worst (being most bold and fierce) do get most? SERM. LXX.

3. Indeed the receiving those gifts is no sign of God's special regard; as the Preacher well observed; *No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them. All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked.* Eccles. ix. 1, 2.

4. God, as St. Austin saith, purposely doth sparingly deal these things to good men, and freely bestoweth them on bad men, to shew how little we ought to value them; how much inferior they are to spiritual goods. For surely he would give the best things to his friends, and the worst to his enemies.

5. Even temporal gifts are dispensed with a very even hand; for if, barring injudicious fancy and vulgar opinion, we rightly prize things, we compare the conveniences and inconveniences of each state, it will be hard to judge which hath the advantage,

Wealth hath more advantages for pleasure; but it hath also more cares, more fears, more crosses, more dangers, more troubles, more temptations.

It hath more plenty; but withal it hath less safety, less ease, less liberty, less quiet, less real enjoyment.

Set the distraction of the rich man's mind against the toil of the poorest man's body; the nauseous surfeits of one against the griping hunger of the other.

That which really doth constitute a state happy, content, may be common to both, or wanting to either, as the person is disposed.

6. The goods of fortune are not purely gifts, but talents deposited in trust for God's service, for which a proportionable return is expected; so that he that hath less of them, hath a less burden to bear, and an easier account to render.

7. Many gifts are not dispensed with personal regard, but for public good; and therefore all have an interest in them.

The wealth, the power, the reputation, the prosperity of a prince, of a nobleman, of a gentleman, are not his,

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but his neighbour's; for governing, for protecting, for encouraging, for assisting whom, they are conferred: the world not being able to subsist in order and peace without subordinate ranks, and without answerable means to maintain them.

Luke i. 79. Matt. iv. 16. Eph. iv. 18. ii. 1. Tit. iii. 3. 1 Pet. iv. 3.

Obj. 2. It is apparent, that God dispenseth his grace, the light of knowledge, and means of salvation, very unequally; some nations living in the clear sunshine of the Gospel, while others *sit in darkness and the shadow of death*; whole nations being detained in barbarous and brutish ignorance.

To answer this exception fully would require much discourse; it being a dark and difficult point: but briefly we may say,

1. That God dispenseth measures of grace according to a just, yet inscrutable wisdom, knowing what use will be made thereof, and what *fruit* men will *bear*. It may therefore be a favour not to dispense light to them, who are not prepared to embrace and improve it well.

2. No man can tell what God doth in preparation, and what obstructions are made by men to his grace.

3. As lower means of grace are conferred, so proportionably less returns are expected.

4. How hard soever it may be to descry the reason of God's proceedings in this case, yet assuredly it is just; and our ignorance of it should not prejudice the belief of those general truths, which are so plainly declared, concerning the universal benignity and impartial equity of God.

Obj. 3. Is it not in holy Scripture sometimes asserted, that God doth act arbitrariously and absolutely: dispensing his bounty and mercy without regard to any quality in men, or deed committed by them, either in whole, or in proportion——God saith, *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*——and, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?*

Rom. ix. 15. Matt. xx. 15.

Is not a plain instance of this dealing alleged by St. Paul concerning Jacob and Esau, that *before the children were born, or had done either good or evil*, God said, *The*

Rom. ix. 11, 12, 13.

elder shall serve the younger; and in regard thereto, in the Prophet, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated?* SERM. LXX.

We answer briefly, that

Such expressions do import, not that God acteth absolutely in the thing itself, but *quoad nos:* not that he acteth without reason, but upon reasons (transcending our capacity, or our means to know it) incomprehensible or undiscernible to us; not that he can give no account, but is not obliged to render any to us; that the methods of his providence commonly are inscrutable; that his proceedings are not subject to our examination and censure; that his acting doth sufficiently authorise and justify itself; that it is high presumption and arrogance for us to scan, sift, or contest, or cavil at the equity or wisdom of God's acting. Rom. xi. 33. Rom. ix. 20.

That God doth not act according to necessity, but is free in dispensing his mercy, and applying it to any person, so that they have nothing to challenge upon account of their own deserts or works; but must refer all to his mere bounty.

However, there can be nothing in these mysteries of predestination and providence, which really doth subvert an assertion so often clearly expressed, and so well grounded in reason, or the consideration of God's nature, attributes, ordinary way of acting, &c.

Whatever expressions are repugnant thereto in sound, whatever instances (depending on occult causes) in appearance do cross it; it yet must stand, that God is impartially merciful, benign, just, &c.

Obj. 4 Had not Jeremy, St. John Baptist, St. Paul, absolute favours and graces conferred on them, who were *sanctified*, and separated from the womb to be prophets and apostles? (Isa. xlix. 1. 5.) Jer. i. 5. Luke i. 15. Gal. i. 15.

Resp. These favours were in design not so much particular and personal, as general and public; those persons being raised up by God upon occasions as needful instruments (*elect vessels*) of his providence, to instruct men, and to reduce them to God; so that God, in raising up such extraordinary persons, did express his common goodness to mankind. Jer. i. 10. Luke i. 16. Acts ix. 15. xxvi. 16.

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The like may be said of that special favour, which was vouchsafed to the holy Virgin, who was κεχαριτωμένη, and *blessed among women*, for the general good of mankind.

Χαῖρε κεχαριτωμένη. Luke i. 28.

The consideration of this point is very useful, and may dispose us to many sorts of good practice.

1. No man should presume upon God's dealing with him more favourably than with others, as if he were a darling, or favourite; that God will indulge him in the commission of any thing prohibited, or in omission of any duty.

No man should indulge himself in any thing, upon a conceit, that God will indulge him, or oversee his errors; and that, in this sense, *He seeth not iniquity in Jacob.*

2. No man should be puffed up with conceit, that God hath a singular regard to him. For all such conceits are groundless and vain; in them men do miserably delude themselves.

1 John iii. 19, 21.

No man can otherwise found any assurance of God's special love to him, than upon a good conscience; testifying, that he doth sincerely love God, and endeavour faithfully to obey his commandments.

3. No man should despair of God's favour; seeing God hath no particular aversation from any; but every person hath the same grounds of hope.

If we can buckle our hearts to observe our duty, we may be sure to be accepted.

Gen. iv. 7.

If thou doest well shalt thou not be accepted?

4. No man should be discouraged for his condition, or fortune; since in allotting it to him God had no disfavour, nor did intend him ill.

God hath no less regard to him, than to persons of the most high, wealthy, prosperous state.

5. No man should repine, murmur, or complain of God's dealing, as if he were unkindly used, more than others: for there is no such thing. God dealeth alike kindly with all.

6. No man, upon account of his rank, wealth, or worldly advantages, should boast or pride himself; seeing thence he partaketh no more than his meanest and poorest neighbour of the principal advantage, God's favour

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7. No man, upon such accounts, should despise his neighbour, *the brother of low degree:* for upon these accounts it appeareth that the Wise Man saith truly, that *He is void of wisdom who despiseth his neighbour;* seeing no man can be despicable, whom God regardeth; seeing *God,* as Elihu saith, *is mighty, and despiseth not any;* seeing the meanest person standeth on equal terms with the greatest in the eye of God.

Jam. i. 9. Ὁ ταπεινός. Prov. xi. 12. xiv. 21. Job xxxvi. 5. (Jam. ii. 6.)

8. Great men should not take themselves for another sort of creatures, or another race of men than their poor neighbours; that the world is theirs, and all things are for them; that they may do what they please; that they are exempted from laws, which oblige others; for in moral and spiritual accounts they are upon a level with others.

Quorum fatis cœlum omne vacavit. *Luc.* lib. vii.

They are but fellow-subjects and fellow-servants with others; all accountable to the same Master.

9. Superiors hence should be moved to deal fairly, gently, and courteously with inferiors; seeing these are their fellow-servants, equally considerable as themselves with the great master of the family.

This is the use, to which St. Paul applieth the consideration:

Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye have a Master in heaven——Ye masters, do the same things unto them, (that is, be conscientiously good to them, as they are faithful to you,) *forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him.*

Col. iv. 1. iii. ult. Ephes. vi. 9.

10. This consideration should preserve us from superstition, or thinking to please or satisfy God, win his favour, or appease his displeasure, by uncouth ways, which he hath not prescribed to all men; to corrupt him by our sacrifices and oblations; our flatteries, glozings, colloguings with him; so that he will indulge us in any bad thing, or excuse us from our true duty, in regard to those affected services.

We do herein but abuse ourselves; for he will not ap-

Coloss. ii. Mic. vi. 7, 8.

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prove or accept us upon any other account, than of discharging our duty, being truly righteous and good.

11. It is matter of comfort and satisfaction to a man, who is conscious of his sincerity, that (whatever his condition and circumstances be) God will have a fair regard thereto, and will not reject him.

Job xxxi. 4, 6.

It was so to Job; *Doth not God see my ways, and count all my steps?——Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know my integrity.*

Jam. ii. 1, 9. Prov. xxviii. 21.

12. The consideration of this point should keep us from partial respects of men.

Not to admire the state of great men, nor to yield them undue deferences, (in prejudice to meaner persons, making greater difference than there is ground for,) not to flatter or humour them in an immoderate measure, or unbeseeming manner.

Οὐ μέλει σοι περὶ οὐδενός. Matt. xxii. 16.

Θαυμάζειν πρόσωπα. Jude 16.

This is that which St. James doth urge in his second chapter, as a very unequal thing.

Levit. xix. 15. Deut. i. 17. xvi. 19.

We should imitate God; we should consider that our opinions and affections should resemble his.

Prov. xxiv. 23. xvi. 5. xxviii. 21.

As in exterior judgment no respect is to be had to the rich above the poor; so neither in the interior judgment or esteem of our mind; to which St. James seemeth to apply the law;

Jam. ii. 9.

If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

13. This should keep us from envying at those who have more worldly advantages.

14. It should keep us from being offended, or scandalized, or perverted into false notions of God, upon occasion of any mysterious points, or hard expressions importing absolute and arbitrary proceedings of God, in predestination or providence. For however they are to be understood, they cannot derogate from the impartial goodness and justice of God.

15. This consideration should engage us readily to pay due respect and reverence to princes, to magistrates, to all our superiors.

For hence we see, that the reason why we are commanded to honour and fear them, is, not their worldly

grandeur of wealth or power, (things of small consideration with God;) but it standeth on a more solid ground, their sacred relations to God, as his representatives and officers; who in his name and behalf do administer justice, and protect right and innocence, encourage virtue, maintain order and peace in the world.

Though God doth not favour their persons as rich and mighty; yet he regardeth his own character imprinted on them; he regardeth his honour and interest concerned in their respect; he regardeth the public good of mankind, which they are constituted to promote: he considers them as the *ministers of his kingdom*, and instruments of conveying his benefits to mankind.

Whence he *giveth salvation to kings;* he by his law, and by his providence, doth guard and secure them from violence, from contempt, from disrespect.

In honouring them, we honour the authority of God, and the character of divinity stamped on them; we serve ourselves, for whose sake they are constituted, for whose good they watch. Rom. xiv. 4. Εἰς ἀγαθόν.

It may also engage us the more gladly and fully to yield them their due respect, to consider, that their condition is not invidious, or their case better than other men's; seeing they are accountable to God for the advantages of it; seeing that God hath no regard to them upon account of that greatness which dazzleth our eyes; seeing that for all the burdens they sustain, for all the cares they take, for all the pains they endure, for our good and public service, they can receive so inconsiderable a recompense from us.

Finally, it should engage us to be very careful of our ways, and diligent in our obedience; seeing there is no other way possible of pleasing God, of gaining his favour and friendship, of appeasing his displeasure, of standing upright, and coming off well in his judgment; this is St. Peter's inference, with which I conclude.

If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. 1 Pet. i. 17.

SERMON LXXI.

THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION ASSERTED AND EXPLAINED.

1 Tim. iv. 10.

——*The living God; who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.*

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THERE are two points of doctrine here plainly asserted by St. Paul, which I shall endeavour to explain and to apply: one, that God is the Saviour of all men; another, that he is peculiarly the Saviour of the faithful[a]. For the first.

God in many respects may truly be conceived and called *the Saviour of all men;* for the word *save* doth in a large acception denote the conferring any kind of good; as implying a removal of need, or indigence. Whence God *is the Saviour of all men*, as the universal preserver and upholder of all things in their being and natural state, as it is in the Psalm: *Thou, Lord, savest man and beast*, or, as the general benefactor, who *is good to all, and whose mercies are over all his works;* who *maketh his sun to rise upon the good and bad, rains upon the just and unjust, is kind* and benign even *to the ungrateful and evil:* or, as the common assistant, protector, and deliverer of all men, who in need or distress have recourse unto him for succour and relief, according to what is said in the Psalms;

Psal. xxxvi. 6. Old. Trasl. and the LXX. σώσεις, or σώζεις. Psal. cxlv. 9. Matt. v. 45. Luke vi. 35.

[a] Θεῷ γὰρ πολλῶν ὄντων, ἐφ' οἷς θαυμάζεται, ᾧδέ πῃ οὕτως, ὡς τὸ πάντας εὐεργετεῖν ἰδιώτατον. *Naz. Orat.* 26.

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The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him. They cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. Psal. ix. 9. cxlv. 18 cxlvi. 7, &c. cvii. 13, &c. lxviii. 19, 20.

In these kinds of senses, especially respecting natural and temporal good, it is manifest that *God is the Saviour of all men.* But that he is in this place termed such in a higher sense, with regard to mercies and blessings of a more excellent kind, and greater consequence, (to mercies and blessings of a spiritual nature, and relating to the eternal state of men,) may from several considerations appear.

1. For that according to apostolical use the words *Saviour*, *Save*, *Salvation*, are wont to bear an evangelical sense, relating to the benefits by our Lord Jesus Christ procured, purchased, and dispensed, concerning the future state of men.

2. For that questionless St. Paul doth here intend God to be *Saviour* of the faithful in this higher sense, and consequently he means him in the same sense (although not in the same degree and measure, or not altogether to the same effects and purposes) a *Saviour of all men.*

3. Because it is plain, that in other places of Scripture, like and parallel to this, such a sense is designed. As, where, in this very Epistle, we are enjoined *to pray for all men*, *For* this reason; *For* saith St. Paul, *this is good and acceptable before God our Saviour, who would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge* (or acknowledgment) *of the truth;* where σωτῆρος ἡμῶν, *the Saviour of us*, seems to denote the Saviour of *us* as *men*, (that interpretation best suiting with the argument St. Paul useth,) however it is expressed that God is, according to desire or intention, the Saviour of all men, in reference to their spiritual and eternal advantage; as willing that all men should embrace the Gospel; which is farther most evidently confirmed by the words immediately following; *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* 1 Tim. ii. 4.

4. Because, according to the tenor of Scripture, and the analogy of Christian doctrine, St. Paul's assertion

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thus interpreted is true, as our subsequent discourse may declare.

1 Tim. i. 1. ii. 3. 2 Tim. i. 10. Tit. ii. 10. 13. iii. 4. i. 3. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Acts xx. 28. Rom. ix. 5.

5. I might add, that *the living God* in our text may very well be understood and expounded to be our Lord Jesus himself; not only as partaking of the divine nature, but as exhibited in the Gospel, the Word incarnate, who as such may seem commonly by St. Paul to be styled, *God our Saviour; God manifested in the flesh; God, that purchased the Church with his own blood; Christ, who is over all, God blessed for evermore.* However it from the premises is sufficiently apparent, that God's being *the Saviour of all men* doth relate unto our Saviour Jesus his undertakings and performances for the salvation of all men; since God in a sense evangelical is no otherwise said to save, than in concurrence with what Jesus did undertake and perform; than as designing, ordering, accepting, prosecuting, and accomplishing our Lord's performances; Jesus being the conduit through which all evangelical mercies and blessings are from God conveyed and dispensed to mankind. So that God being *the Saviour of mankind*, is either directly and immediately, or by equivalence and in consequence, the same with Jesus being *the Saviour of all men.*

Eph. i. 3, 6.

That our Lord Jesus is *the Saviour of all men;* or that the most signal of his saving performances do in their nature and their design respect all men, as meant for, as conducing and tending to all men's salvation, yea and as in their own nature (supposing men's due and possible concurrence with them) effectually productive of their salvation; that, I say, this ancient catholic point of doctrine (the which we profess to believe, when with the Church we say in the Nicene Creed—*Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven,* and the which particularly our Church in its Catechism, in the Ministration of Baptism, and in the Communion, doth most evidently and expressly declare itself to embrace) is very true, many full and clear testimonies of Scripture do shew, many reasons grounded on Scripture do prove; the which we shall first touch, and then further both illustrate and

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enforce the truth, by declaring upon what accounts, or in what respects our Lord is the Saviour of all men; as also by an application to practice, declarative of its usefulness and subserviency to the purposes of piety. For immediate testimonies:

1. Jesus is called the *Saviour* of the world; who was sent and came into the world to save the world; whose chief performances were designed and directed to the salvation of the world; *We have heard and known*, said the men of Samaria, *that this is truly the Saviour of the world, the Christ.* *We have seen and testified*, saith St. John, *that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world*, (that *world*, of which it is said, *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not*,) And, *God sent his Son into the world, not to judge* (or *not to condemn*) *the world, but that the world by him should be saved*, (that *world*, whereof a great part he in effect would both judge and condemn for unbelief and disobedience, he did come primarily upon intent to save.) And, *The bread which I shall give is*, saith he, *my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* And, *Behold*, said the Baptist, *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.* And, *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their offences*, saith St. Paul, *to the world*, which otherwise he expresseth by τὰ πάντα, *by him to reconcile all things unto himself.* And, *He is a propitiation not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world*, (*the whole world*, in contradistinction from all Christians, to whom St. John speaketh in that place of his Catholic Epistle; that κόσμος ὅλος, of which he saith in that same Epistle, κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται, *the whole world lieth in wickedness.*) In all which places that the *world* according to its ordinary acceptation (and as every man would take it at first hearing) doth signify the whole community of mankind, comprehending men of all sorts and qualities, good and bad, believers and infidels, (not in a new, unusual sense, any special restrained world of some persons, particularly regarded or qualified,) will, I suppose, easily appear to him, who shall without prejudice or partiality attend to the common use thereof in

John iv. 42. 1 John iv. 14. John i. 10. John iii. 17. xii. 47. John v. 22. Acts x. 42. xvii. 31. Rom. xiv. 10. 2 Cor. v. 10. John vi. 51. John i. 29. 2 Cor. v. 19 Coloss. i. 20. 1 John ii. 2. 1 John v. 19.

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Scripture, especially in St. John, who most frequently applieth it as to this, so to other cases or matters.

2. The object of our Saviour's undertakings and intentions is described by qualities and circumstances agreeing unto all men. All the sons of Adam are by disobedience in a lost condition, (lost in error and sin, lost in guilt and condemnation, lost in trouble and misery;) and, *The Son of man*, saith he himself, *came to save, τὸ ἀπολωλὸς, that which was lost*, (or whatever was lost.) *All men have sinned*, saith St. Paul, *and are fallen short of the glory of God*; and, *It is a faithful saying*, saith the same Apostle, *and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. God commended his love to us, that we being yet sinners Christ died for us.* All men naturally are weak, and wicked; are in a state of alienation and enmity toward God: and, *Even when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly: When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: Christ once suffered for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous.* All men have souls and lives exposed to misery and ruin: and, *The Son of man*, so he assures us, *came not to destroy, but to save the souls* (or *lives*) *of men.* Those propositions in form, respecting an indefinite object, are according to vulgar use equipollent to those, wherein the object is expressed universally. However,

Matt. xviii. 11.
Rom. iii. 23.
1 Tim. i. 15.
Rom. v. 8. Ephes. ii. 1, &c.
Rom. v. 6, 10.
1 Pet. iii. 18.
Lukeix. 56.

3. They are interpreted by others, expressed in terms as general and comprehensive as can be; such as these texts contain: *The living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of the faithful*, (of all men universally, not only of the faithful, though chiefly of them.) *God our Saviour would have all men to be saved; He is the mediator of God and men, who gave himself a ransom for all men; God hath shut up all men under sin, that he might have mercy upon all. The love of Christ constraineth us, judging this, that if one died for all, then are all dead; and he died for all, that they who live may not live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again. The saving grace of God hath appeared to all men*, (or the

1 Tim. iv. 10.
1 Tim. ii. 4, 5, 6.
Rom. xi. 32.
2 Cor. v. 14, 15.
Tit. ii. 11.

grace of God, which is saving to all men, hath appeared, ἐπεφάνη ἡ χάρις τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡ σωτήριος πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις.) *He tasted death* (ὑπὲρ παντὸς) *for every man. He is the true light, that enlightened every man coming into the world.* Which propositions do sufficiently determine the extent of our Saviour's saving performances. SERM. LXXI. Heb. ii. 9, 10. John i. 9.

4. Farther yet, to exclude any limitation or diminution of these so general terms, (at least to exclude any limitation in regard to all the members of the visible Church, which are or have been incorporated thereinto,) it is expressed, that our Saviour's undertakings did respect even those, who (by their own default) might lose the benefit of them, and who in effect should not be saved. For, of those false teachers, who introduced *pernicious heresies*, it is said, that *they denied the Lord who bought them* [b]. And St. Paul implies, that by scandalous example *a weak brother, for whom Christ died*, being induced to sin, might be *destroyed. And by thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?* And, *Do not*, saith he again, *by thy eating destroy him, for whom Christ died.* And the Apostle to the Hebrews signifies concerning apostates, that they do *trample upon the Son of God, and pollute the blood of Christ, by which they are sanctified.* 2 Pet. ii. 1. 1 Cor. viii. 11. Rom. xiv. 15. Heb. x. 29.

5. The supposition thereof is the ground of duty, and an aggravation of sin.

Thus doth the holy Scripture, in terms very direct and express, declare this truth, indeed so clearly and fully, that scarce any other point of Christian doctrine can allege more ample or plain testimony of Scripture for it; whence it is wonderful, that any pretending reverence to Scripture should dare (upon consequences of their own devising) to question it; and many reasons confirming the same may be deduced thence.

1. [c] The impulsive cause, which moved God to design the sending our Lord for to undertake what he did, is expressed to be philanthropy, or love to mankind;

[b] Væ illis, qui auctorem propriæ salutis negaverunt. *Ambr.* Ps. xxxix.

[c] Greg. Naz. saith of Julian, διὰ τοῦτο μισήσας Χριστὸν, ὅτι δι' αὐτοῦ σέσωσται. *Athan. Orat.* 32.

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Tit. iii. 4. Ἡ φιλανθρωπία καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Θεοῦ. John iii. 16. Rom. v. 8. Ephes. ii. 4.

But, saith St. Paul, *when the kindness and love of God our Saviour unto man appeared, according to his mercy he saved us. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son. God hereby commends his love unto us, that we as yet being sinners, Christ died for us.* It was not a particular fondness of affection, (such whereof no particular ground can be assigned or imagined,) but an universal (infinitely rich and abundant) goodness, mercy, and pity toward this eminent part of his creation, sunk into distress and lamentable wretchedness, which induced God to send his Son for the redemption of mankind.

2. God declares himself impartial (most particularly) in this case; that as all men in regard to him stand alike related, and are in the same condition, so he proceeds with indifferent affection, and upon the same terms with all. He is equally the Lord and Maker of all men; and all men are equally involved in guilt, and exposed to ruin; upon which grounds St. Paul inferreth, that as to God's regard of man's salvation, there is no difference between Jews and Greeks; and by parity of reason there can be none between any other sorts of persons, antecedently to Rom. ii. 11. God's merciful intentions. *There is*, saith he, *no respect of persons with God*, (as to preparing the capacities and means, to propounding the terms and conditions of salRom. iii. 29. vation, for about these he discourses;) for, *Is he*, saith the Apostle, assigning the reason of that assertion, *the* Rom. x. 12. *God of the Jews only, and not of the Gentiles? No: There is no difference*, saith he, *of Jew and Greek, for there is the same Lord of all, being rich* (rich in mercy and bounty) *unto all that call upon him;* that is, by consequence simply unto all; for St. Paul implies, that God therefore provided that all men should have the means of calling upon him imparted to them; for that, *how should they call upon him without faith?* and *how should they believe without preachers?* and *how should there be preachers, if they were not sent?* Whence he infers (against the sense of those Jews, with whom he disputes) that it was necessary that the Apostles should have a com-

Rom. iii. 22, 23. mission to preach unto all. And, *The righteousness of*

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God by the faith of Christ is manifested unto all, and over all that believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: the relation of God is the same to all men, (He *is the God and Lord of all;)* the state and need of all men are the same; there is therefore no difference, excepting that consequent one, which compliance or non-compliance with the conditions offered unto all doth induce. It is true in this respect, what the Wise Man saith, ὁ πάντων δεσπότης ὁμοίως προνοεῖ περὶ πάντων· *He* that is Lord of all, *careth* (or provideth) *for all alike;* and what Clemens Alexandrinus says, as to this particular, *All things lie equally for all from God; so that no man can complain of him* [d], as partial to some, and deficient to others. Wisd. vi. 7.

3. We may observe, that the undertakings and performances of *our Lord* are for nature and extent compared with those of Adam, (who was τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος, *a type of him that was to come;)* as Adam, being a representative of mankind, did by his transgression involve all men in guilt, and subject them to condemnation; provoked God's wrath, and drew the effects thereof upon us; brought all men under the slavery of sin, and necessity of death; so was *our Lord* the *proxy* of mankind, and by his performances in our behalf did undo for our advantage, what the former did to our prejudice; by his entire obedience expiating the common guilt, suspending the fatal sentence, pacifying God's wrath, reducing righteousness, and restoring life to all that would embrace them; so doth St. Paul at large (in the 5th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans) propound and prosecute the comparison; closing his discourse thus: *Therefore as by the offence of one man judgment came upon all men to condemnation; so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life.* As guilt, wrath, and death forementioned, were the fruits of what Adam did, falling upon all; so pardon, grace, and life, were (in Rom. v. 14. Rom. v. 18.

[d] Πᾶσι πάντα ἴσα κεῖται παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ ἐξίν αὐτὰς ἀμεμφής. *Clem. Alex. Strom.* vii. p. 301.

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design) the effects of what *our Saviour* performed relating unto all. Yea, the same comparison St. Paul seems to intimate in his second Epistle to the Corinthians, where he saith, that *if one died for all, then are all men dead;* that is Christ's dying for all men, implies all men in a state of condemnation and subjection to death; and that inference supposes the performances of the *first* and *second* Adam to be in their nature and primary effects coextended and commensurate. The same St. Paul seemeth in express terms to say, *All men have sinned, and are fallen short* (or *are destitute*) *of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace* (or *favour*) *by the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* (All men are justified, that is, according to God's favourable intention and design.) Yea, the very reason why God permitted sin and death to prevail so universally is intimated to be his design of extending a capacity of righteousness and life unto all; so St. Paul tells us: God hath shut up all men under sin, that he might have mercy upon all. And particularly, that by virtue of Christ's performances death is abolished, and immortality is conferred upon all men, St. Paul most expressly teacheth us; *For*, saith he, *as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

2 Cor. v. 14.
Rom. iii. 23, 24.
Rom. xi. 32.
1 Cor. xv. 22.
2 Tim. i. 10.

I observe that Prosper (an eager disputant about points allied to this) several times confesseth, that Christ may be most rightly affirmed to have been crucified for the redemption of the whole world, especially upon two accounts, for his true susception of human nature, and for the common perdition of all men in the first man[e]: we have touched the latter; let us add, that

Rom. vi. 23.

4. Our Saviour assuming our nature, and partaking of our flesh, *being made in the likeness of men, and found in fashion as a man;* yea, endued with the passions and infirmities of man's nature, exposed to the tribulations and inconveniences of man's life, did thereby ally himself, and put on a fraternal relation unto all men. *Ferusmacl.* saith

Phil. ii. 7.
Heb iv. 15. ii. 17. v. 2.
Gal. iv. 4.
Heb. ii. 14, 11, 12, 16.

[e] Cum itaque rectissime dicatur Salvator pro totius mundi redemptione crucifixus, propter veram naturæ humanæ susceptionem, et propter communem in primo homine omnium perditionem, &c. *Prosp. ad Gal.* c. 9.

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the Apostle to the Hebrews, *as children* (the children he means of the same father, or brethren; as the tenor of his discourse makes evident) are *partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;* that is, graciously designing to become a brother to the children of men, he assumed all that was proper to man's nature. *God*, saith St. Paul, made πᾶν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων, *the whole nation or race of men, dwelling upon the face of the earth, of one blood;* and of that one blood our Saviour was pleased to take part, entitling us thereby to a consanguinity with him[f]; and it was a title of his, which he seemed to affect and delight in, *the Son of man.* He being such did sanctify our nature, by the closest conjunction thereof to the divine nature, and rendering it more than a temple of the Divinity; he dignified it, and (as that Apostle intimateth) advanced it above the angelical nature by an alliance to God himself; he thereby not only became qualified to mediate between God and man, and capable to transact that great business of man's salvation; but was engaged, and in a manner obliged to do it; for as he was *a man*, he surely was endued with the best of human affections, universal charity and compassion, which would excite him to promote the welfare of all; as he was *a man*, he was subject to the common law of humanity, which obliges to endeavour the common benefit of men. As he was *a brother* in relation, so he could not, he would not be otherwise in affection; he is not to be conceived deficient in performance of the offices suitable to that condition. That good-will which he requires us to bear toward all men indifferently, good and bad, friends and enemies, he questionless did bear himself in the highest degree, and to the utmost extent; the general beneficence, which in his conversation and practice he did express, doth signify how large his desires and intentions were in regard to the welfare of men; so that we may thence well aver with St. Ambrose: *Incarnationis*

Acts xvii. 26.

Heb. ii. 11.

Heb. ii. 7. 16.

1 Tim. ii. 5.

Matt. v. 44. Gal. vi. 10. Acts x. 38.

Ambr. de Parad. 8.

[f] Ἡ πρόσληψις τῆς σαρκὸς ἐκ βουλὴν τὸν λόγον φύσει Κύριον ὄντα, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἐλευθέρωσις ἣν ἡ γινομένη παρὰ τοῦ λόγου πάσης ἀνθρωποτητος, &c. *Athan. c. Arr. Orat.* iii. p. 385.

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Dei mysterium est universæ salus creaturæ; The Mystery of God's incarnation doth respect the salvation of all mankind, according to his desire and design.

Rev. xv. ii. 14. Acts x. 36. 1 Cor. xi. 3. Mat. xxviii. 18. xi. 27. John iii. 35. xiii. 3. Heb. ii. 8. i. 2. John xvii. 2. v. 22. Phil. ii. 9. Psal. cx. 7.

5. We are taught that *our Lord* hath by his *saving* performances acquired a rightful propriety in, and a title of dominion over all men living g; to him is committed the governance and protection of all mankind, as the reward of what he did and suffered for its sake. *He is* called *the Lord of all men;* and *the head of every man.* It is said that *all things by his father are given into his hand*, and *put under his feet;* that *power is given him over all flesh;* that *all authority is given him in heaven and earth; all judgment is committed to him.* Which privileges, rights, dignities, are declared to have been procured by the virtue of his saving performances, and purchased by the price of his blood. *For, to this end*, saith St. Paul, *Christ both died and rose again, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and living*, (or might exercise Lordship over both the dead and living, ἵνα καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων κυριεύσῃ:) and, *We are not our own*, (saith he again,) *we are bought with a price:* and, *We see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God he might taste death for every man*, (or, for the suffering of death, that by God's grace he might taste death for every man, crowned with glory and honour; for there seems to be such a trajection in the words:) and, *He was obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross; therefore hath God exalted him, and given him a name above every name.* Subjection then and redemption, as they have one ground, so they are implied to have the same extent, as every one must call Christ *Lord*, so he may call him *Saviour;* therefore his *Lord*, because his *Saviour*. And since Christ hath got an authority over all men, a propriety in every man; since he hath undertaken to govern and protect the world, he questionless, as a prince of incomparable benignity and clemency, doth seriously intend and de-

Rom. xiv. 9. 1 Cor. vi. 20. Heb. ii. 9. Phil. ii. 8, 9. Rev. v. 9, 12.

g Ἀνθρωπον αὐτὸν ποιήσας ὁ πατὴρ οὐχ ἁπλῶς ἐποίησεν ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλ' εἰς τὸ κυριεύσαι πάντων αὐτὸν, καὶ ἀγιάζειν παντας διὰ τῦ χρίσματος πεποίηκεν. *Ath. Orat. 3. in Arr.* 385.

sire the best welfare of all his people; it surely cannot be a small benefit to the community of men, that they are his subjects; the objects of his princely care, and of his mercy. SERM. LXXI.

——Κήδεται τῶν συμπάντων, ὅπερ καὶ καθήκει καὶ κυρίῳ πάντων γενομένῳ· σωτὴρ γάρ ἐστιν, ἐχὶ τῶν μὲν, τῶν δ' ἀ. *He taketh care of all which doth become him that is Lord of all; for that he is indifferently the Saviour of all*, saith Clem. Alexand. Clem. Strom vii. p. 505.

6. We are commanded to *pray*, *intercede*, and *give thanks* (indifferently) *for all men*, even for heathens and persecutors; as for the objects of God's benevolent affection; whom *he would have to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of his truth*; expressing our charity in conformity to the unconfined goodness of God. Very good reason (argues St. Chrysostom) there is why we should pray for all men; for if God doth will the salvation of all men, we, in imitation of him, should will the same; and if we desire it, we should pray for it [h]. Upon which score the Catholic Church hath constantly and carefully observed this precept; so the learned writer *de Vocatione Gentium* assures us: [i] *Which law of supplication*, saith he, *the devotion of all priests and of all the faithful people doth so observe, that there is no part of the world, in which such prayers are not solemnized by the Christian people. The Church of God doth therefore supplicate, not only for the Saints, and the regenerate in Christ, but also for all infidels, and enemies of the cross of Christ; for all idolaters, all persecutors, all Jews, heretics, and schismatics.* And Prosper himself: [k] *Setting aside*, saith he, *that distinction*, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 4.

h Μιμοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ——εἰ πάντας θέλει σωθῆναι, εἰκότως ὑπὲρ πάντων δεῖ εὔχεσθαι· εἰ πάντας αὐτὸς ἐθελήσει σωθῆναι, θέλε καὶ σύ· εἰ δὲ θέλεις, εὔχου. *Chrysost.*

i Quam legem supplicationis ita omnium sacerdotum, et omnium fidelium devotio, concorditer tenet, ut nulla pars mundi sit, in qua hujusmodi orationes non celebrentur a populis Christianis. Supplicat ergo ubique Ecclesia Dei non solum pro Sanctis et in Christo jam regeneratis, sed etiam pro omnibus infidelibus, et inimicis crucis Christi, &c.

k Remota ergo discretione, quam divina scientia intra secretum justitiæ suæ continet, sincerissime credendum atque profitendum est Deum velle, ut omnes homines salvi fiant; siquidem Apostolus, cujus ista sententia est, solicitissime præcipit quod in omnibus Ecclesiis piissime custoditur, ut Deo pro omnibus hominibus supplicetur. *Pros. ad Obj. Vincent.* 2.

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which the divine knowledge contains within the secret of his justice, it is most sincerely to be believed and professed, that God wills that all men shall be saved; since the Apostle, whose sentence that is, doth most solicitously enjoin, that which is in all the Churches most piously observed, that God should be implored for all men. So doth he attest the common practice, and declare the ground thereof.

7. For which practice, and for the confirmation of its ground, (God's serious willingness and desire that men should be saved,) we have the pattern of our *Lord* himself praying to his *Father* for the pardon of the worst of men, his murderers; which as it demonstrated his charity toward them, so it argues that he was their *Saviour*, for that otherwise he knew they could not be in any capacity of having pardon. His praying for them implies the possibility of their receiving forgiveness; and such a possibility doth presuppose a disposition in God to grant it, and consequently a satisfaction provided, such as God requires and accepts, and which shall avail to their benefit, if toward the application thereof they perform their parts.

8. Indeed it is not easy to conceive, how we can heartily pray for pardon, or for any other blessing, either for ourselves or for others, without supposing Christ to be *our* Saviour and *theirs;* without supposing God placable and well affected towards us and them in Christ, upon the account of his performances and sufferings in our and their behalf. We are to offer up all our devotions in the name of Christ, and for his sake must implore all mercies and blessings from God; which how can we do seriously and with faith, if we may reasonably question whether Christ's merits do respect us, and consequently whether they can be available in our behalf? *I will*, saith St. Paul, *that men should pray in every place, lifting up pure hands, without wrath or doubting:* which precept how can any man observe; how can any man pray with calmness and confidence of mind, who is not assured that Christ is his Saviour, or that God for Christ's sake is disposed to grant his requests? But this point we may be obliged to prosecute somewhat farther in the application.

1 Tim. ii. 8.

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9. Either our Saviour's performances do respect all men, or some men (the far greatest part of men) do stand upon no other terms, than those of the first creation, or rather of the subsequent lapse and condemnation; being subject to extremely rigorous law, and an infallibly certain guilt, and consequently to inevitable punishment; being utterly secluded from all capacity of mercy, and having no place of repentance left unto them, (the place of repentance being a most signal part of Christ's purchase;) so that if any such man should, according to the proportion of his light and ability, perform what is agreeable to God's law, doing what is possible to him (this may be supposed, for what is possible to a man he may do, what is possible is possible) in order to his salvation, he notwithstanding should be incapable of any mercy, favour, or acceptance. But, beside that it is expressly said, that *God* did *shut up all men under sin, that he might have mercy upon all;* and that we are plainly enough informed, that our Lord did reverse the first fatal sentence, and hath, as the mediator between God and man, evacuated all former covenants by establishing a new one, (for if any former *covenant had been good, there had been no place sought for a new one*, as the Apostle to the Hebrews discourseth)—besides these considerations, I say, and beside that such suppositions do not well suit to the nature of God, and do not well consist with the tenor of his providence; God positively and vehemently disclaimeth this rigour of proceeding; he both under Law and Gospel declares himself ready to admit any man's repentance; yea, earnestly invites all men thereto; yea, grievously explains and expostulates with men for not repenting; yea, not only says it, but swears it by his own life, that he desires any wicked man should do it; he strongly asserts, he earnestly inculcates, he loudly proclaims to all his readiness to pardon, and his delight in shewing mercy; the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering. He declares, that he will exact an account of men, according to proportion, answerable to their willingness to do what they could; and to the improvements of those

Acts v. 31. Luke xxiv. 47.

Rom. xi. 32.

Heb. viii. 7.

Acts xvii. 20.

Ezek. xviii.

Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Isa. lv. 3, 7. Mic. vii. 8. Rom. ii. 4.

2 Cor. viii. 12. Matt. xxv. 25.

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talents (those measures of light and strength) which they had, or might have had; that whoever is ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ πιστὸς, faithful in using the smallest power, shall be accepted and rewarded. He represents himself impartial in his judgment and acceptance of men's persons and performances; any man, in any nation, his sincere, though imperfect, piety and righteousness being acceptable to him: the final ruin of men is not imputed to any antecedent defect lying in man's state, or God's will, to no obstacle on God's part, nor incapacity on the part of man, but wholly to man's blameable neglect, or wilful abuse of the means conducible to his salvation: no want of mercy in God, or virtue in the passion of our Lord, are to be mentioned or thought of; infidelity (formal or interpretative) and obstinate impenitency, disappointing God's merciful intentions, and frustrating our Lord's saving performances and endeavours, are the sole banes of mankind; *Here*, saith our Lord, *is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.* And, *I speak these things, that ye might be saved; but ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.* And, *How often have I willed to gather thy children, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!* Of the Pharisees and Lawyers our Saviour said, that *they defeated the counsel of God toward themselves*, (ἠθέτησαν τὴν βελὴν Θεὸν εἰς ἑαυτὰς,) the counsel of God, who designed to bring them to repentance by the instruction and exhortation of St. John the Baptist. Our Saviour invited many to the participation of the Gospel, *(that great feast of fat things to all people*, as the Prophet Isaiah calleth it;) but they would not come, saith the text: he iterated his message, but they, carelessly neglecting it (ἀμελήσαντες) *went away, one to his farm, another to his merchandise, and the rest took his servants, and intreated them spitefully, and slew them.* The *sower* (our *Lord*) did sow in the *field (the world)* the good seed of heavenly truth; but some would not admit it into their heads or hearts; from others temptation bare it away; in others worldly cares and desires choked it; our Lord spake the

Luke xix. 17. xvi. 10.

Acts x. 34. 1 Pet. i. 17.

John iii. 19.

John v. 34, 40.

Matt. xxiii. 37.

Luke vii. 30.

Isa. xxv. 6.

Matt. xxii. 3, 5.

Matt. xiii. 37, 38.

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most convincing words, such as no man ever spake, such as drew *publicans* and *harlots* into the kingdom of heaven; he performed most astonishing works, such as never the like were done, which were sufficient to convert Tyre and Sidon, yea to have preserved Sodom, but without effect; such were the invincible obstinacy, the gross stupidity, the corrupt prejudices, and perverse affections of his auditors and spectators, upon which causes our Lord chargeth the ineffi- cacy and unsuccessfulness of his endeavours for their salvation. So doth St. Stephen call the Jews, unto whom the Gospel was offered, *hard-necked, uncircumcised in heart and ears;* such as *did always resist the Holy Spirit.* St. Paul gives the same character of them, and assigns the same cause of their rejecting the Gospel. And of the Jews of Antioch it is said, that they did *thrust away the word of salvation, judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life,* (that is, disdaining to embrace the overture of everlasting life made unto them.) And, *Despisest thou the riches of God's goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; being ignorant that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?* So St. Paul expostulates with the incredulous Jew. And, *How,* saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, *shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* So do our Lord and his Apostles state the reason of men's miscarrying in this great affair; signifying all requisite care and provision to be made on God's part for their salvation; and imputing the obstruction solely to their voluntary default of compliance with God in his conduct and management thereof.

John vii. 46. xv. 22, 24. ix. 32. Matt. xxi. 31. John vii. 31. v. 44. xii. 43. Luke xvi. 14. Matt. xiii. 13. xxiii. 14. Acts vii. 51. xxviii. 26. Acts xiii. 46. Rom. ii. 4. Heb. ii. 3.

Neither are the dealings and declarations of God toward those who lived under the Law and Prophets, impertinent to this purpose; they are applicable upon consideration of parity in reason, or likeness in case.

What remonstrances concerning the gentleness, kindness, and equity of his dealings, what exprobrations of their stubbornness and stupidity God did anciently make to Israel under that particular dispensation, (which yet in tendency and in representation may be deemed general,) the same he might now use toward all mankind, under

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this *universal economy*, wherein God hath given to his *Son, the heathen for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for his possession*; whereby *all the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of the Lord, and his Christ*; which hath erected an unconfined kingdom of grace; to which all men in design and of right are subject; in respect to which every nation is in obligation and duty become the people of God. *What*, said *God* to them, *could I have done more to my vineyard than I have done? Wherefore, when I looked for grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes? O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help. I have spread out my hands all the day long to a rebellious and gainsaying people. I spake unto you rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; I called, but ye answered not; I have called, and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. When I called, ye did not answer; when I spake, ye did not hear; but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.* And, *Behold their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken; behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach, they have no delight in it. They refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear; yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, which the Lord of hosts hath sent in his Spirit.* Which passages, with many others of the like importance that occur, do imply the large extent of God's merciful intentions, and the competency of the means, which God affords for the salvation of men; that he wants no affection or inclination to save them; that he neglects no means proper for effecting it; that he draws them into the way leading thither by serious and earnest invitation, directs them by needful light and instruction, excites them by powerful arguments and persuasions; and as St. Ambrose speaketh, *Quod in Deo fuit, ostendit omnibus, quod omnes voluit liberare: God shewed to all, that what was in him, he did will to deliver* (or save) *all men.* Whence he may truly and properly be called the

Psal. ii. 8. Rev. xi. 15.

Isa. v. 4.

Hos. xiii. 9. Isa. lxv. 2. Rom. x. 21. Jer. vii. 13.

Prov. i. 24, 29.

Isa. lxv. 12. lxvi. 4. Ezek. xii. 2. Jer. vi. 10

Zech. vii. 11, 12.

DeParad. 8.

Benefactor and Saviour, even of those, who by their wilful malice or neglect do not obtain salvation [h]. For in respect to the same favours, which are exhibited and tendered to them, he is the Saviour of those, who by hearkening to God's call, and complying with God's design; by well using the means vouchsafed, and performing the conditions required, do finally attain salvation. SERM. LXXI.

If it be said, that these transactions do refer only to God's own people, or to those only, unto whom God pleased to dispense especial revelations of truth and overtures of mercy; that we, therefore, cannot thence infer any thing concerning the general extent of God's design, or the virtue of Christ's performances in respect to all mankind; we may to this suggestion rejoin, that by observing the manner of God's proceedings toward them, unto whom he openly declareth his mind and will, we may reasonably collect how he standeth affected toward others, and by what rules, or upon what accounts, he dealeth with them; taking in the analogy of reason, and parity or disparity of the case. As to God's affection, it is the same every where, agreeable to that nature, which inclineth him to be *good to all*, and *merciful over all his creatures*, as the Psalmist tells us; unto which disposition his providence yields attestation; for ἐκ ἀμάρτυρον ἀφῆκεν ἑαυτὸν, ἀγαθοποιῶν, *he did not leave himself without testimony, doing good to all*, as St. Paul tells us; although he doth not dispense his favours in the same method, or discover his meaning by the same light, or call all men to him with the same voice and language. Psal v. 9. Acts xiv. 17.

Neither was mankind ever left destitute of that *divine grace*, which, as the good writer *de Vocatione Gentium* saith, *never denied itself to any ages, with the same virtue, in different measure, with an unchangeable counsel, and multiform operation* [i]. So in one place; and in another,

[h] —ἀπολογέμενος μετὰ ἀποδείξεως ὅτι πάντα τὰ εἰς αὐτὸν ἥκοντα ἐπὶ σωτηρίᾳ τῶν κρινομένων πεποίηκεν—*Bas. in Ps.* vii.

[i] Gratia Dei nullis seculis se negavit, virtute una, quantitate diversa, concilio incommutabili, opere multiformi. ii. 5.

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[k] *There was always*, saith he, *dispensed to all men a certain measure of instruction from above, which, although it came from a more occult and sparing grace, did yet suffice to some for remedy, to all for testimony.*

Comparing the different states of men, we may substitute with St. Paul[l], for the *law of revelation* engraved upon *tables*, the *law of nature* written in men's *hearts*; for *prophetical instructions*, the *dictates of reason*: for *audible* admonitions and reproofs, *secret* whispers of grace, and checks of conscience; for *extraordinary* instances of divine power, the *ordinary* works of the creation, (*by which God's eternal divinity and power are discernible;*) for *special* and occasional influences of providence, the *common* and continual expressions of divine beneficence; then allowing for the disparity (as to measure of evidence and efficacy) in these things; and as to the rest, the case is the same. If one part hath means more clear and forcible, yet those which are granted to the other are not void of use or virtue; by them all men in all places *may seek God, if haply they may feel him and find him*; yea may, as St. Paul implieth, be able to know God, and induced to serve him; to thank him, and to glorify him in some measure; in a measure answerable to such light and strength; no more doth God require, for no more will he reckon with them. If their helps be deemed more low and scanty, their duty, in proportion, is less high, and their account will be more easy. Enough certainly they have to excuse God from misprision of not having provided competently for them, to render them, if they do not well use and improve it, inexcusable; and what they have is an effect of God's mercy procured and purchased by their Saviour. But of this point we may have occasion after-

Acts.xiv.17.

Acts xvii. 27. Rom. i. 18, 20. ii. 15. 26. i. 21.

Rom. i. 20.

[k] Adhibita est semper universis hominibus quædam supernæ mensura doctrinæ, quæ etsi occultioris parciorisque gratiæ fuit, sufficit tamen quibusdam ad remedium, omnibus ad testimonium. ii. 15.

[l] Rom. ii. 14, 15.

—Nulli nationi hominum bonitatis suæ dona subtraxit, ut propheticas voces et præcepta legalia convincerentur in elementorum obsequiis, et testimoniis accepisse. *De Voc. G.* i. 5. Rom. i. 19.

ward to say more; I shall now only add, that this suggestion, well considered, may afford another argument to confirm our doctrine; which is this. SERM. LXXI.

10. If *our Lord* be the *Saviour* of all those to whom God's truth is declared, and his mercy offered; or, if he be the *Saviour* of all the members of the visible Church; particularly if he be the *Saviour* of those, who among these, rejecting the overtures and means of grace, or by disobedience abusing them, shall in the event fail of being saved, then is he the *Saviour* of all men. But *our Lord* is the *Saviour* of those persons; and therefore he is *the Saviour of all men*. The *assumption* we assayed to shew in the last argument; and many express testimonies of Scripture before mentioned establish it; the common style of Scripture doth imply it, when in the apostolical writings to all the visibly faithful indifferently the relation to Christ as their Saviour is assigned, an interest in all his saving performances is supposed, the title of σωζόμενοι and σεσωσμένοι (with others equivalent, of *justified*, *sanctified*, *regenerated*, *quickened*, &c.) are attributed. And in our text, God is said to be *the Saviour* chiefly τῶν πιστῶν, *of the faithful*; which word in its common acception denotes all visible members of the Christian communion. And for its confirmation we adjoin; the Apostles at first, and the Church ever since after them (except some heterodox people of late) have professed readily to confer holy baptism, and therein to dispense remission of sins, together with other evangelical graces and privileges, to every man professing his faith in Christ, and resolution to observe Christ's law, upon this supposition,) that Christ is the *Saviour* of all such persons, and by his salutary passion hath purchased that remission for them; although the dispensers of these graces could not discern what decrees God in his secret providence had passed upon them, or what the event should be as to their final state; yea although according to the judgment of prudence they could not but conceive, that all such should not be saved, but that many of them should be of those, who (as the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh) would *draw back unto perdition*, Heb. x. 39. 2 Pet. i. 9.

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who (as St. Peter implies some might and would do) would forget the purgation, which they had received of their sins. That in thus doing the Church proceeds upon a persuasion that Christ is truly the Saviour of all its visible members, duly admitted and incorporated thereinto, the thing itself plainly signifies; the tenor of its practice makes palpable; the forms of speech used in its holy administrations (of prayers, of sacraments, of exhortations) do suppose or express. For how can each member singly be asserted in holy baptism to be washed from his sins, and sanctified to God, and made regenerate or adopted into the number of God's children, and made partaker of Christ's death? How can thanksgiving in the common name, in most general terms, be offered up for Christ's saving performances? or the holy bread and cup be imparted to each communicant as symbols and pledges of Christ's charity and mercy toward him? How can every Christian be instigated to obedience in gratitude to Christ; and those who transgress Christ's laws, upbraided for their ingratitude toward him; their rejecting, or renouncing, despising, or abusing him and his salvation? How can such things be said and done with any truth or consistency; yea, without forgery and mockery, if every baptized Christian hath not an interest in our Lord's performances; if Christ be the Saviour only of an uncertain and unknown part in the Church? This consideration of the Church's practice hath made even the most vehement assertors of St. Austin's doctrine, (strained to the highest pitch,) in the more ancient and modest times, fully to acknowledge this position; that Christ is the Redeemer of every member of the visible Church, as appears by this remarkable decree of the Council of Valentia in France, (consisting of the bishops of three provinces, favourers of Godscalcus's opinions.) [m] *We also do believe it most firmly to be held, that all the multitude of the faithful, being regenerated by water and the Holy Spirit, and hereby truly incorporated into the Church, and according to the aposto-*

Anno 855.

[m] Item firmissime tenendum credimus, &c. supra.

lical doctrine baptized into the death of Christ, is by his blood washed from their sins. Because there could be no true regeneration, unless there were made also a true redemption; since in the sacraments of the Church there is nothing empty, (or vain,) nothing ludificatory; but all thoroughly true, and supported by its own very truth and sincerity. Yet that out of the very company of believers and the redeemed, some are eternally saved, because by God's grace they faithfully abide in their redemption, bearing the Lord's speech in their hearts, *He that perseveres to the end shall be saved;* and that others, because they would not abide in the salvation of the faith, which they at first received, and did rather choose to frustrate the grace of redemption by evil doctrine or life, than to keep it, do nowise arrive to the plenitude of salvation, and to the perception of eternal beatitude. It is then a catholic and true doctrine, that at least Christ is a Saviour of all appearing Christians; and supposing the truth thereof, I say that by consequence he is also the Saviour of all men. For it appeareth thence, that the design of our Saviour's performances did not flow from, or was not grounded upon any special love, or any absolute decree concerning those persons who in event shall be saved; since according to that supposition it extendeth to many others; wherefore it proceeded from God's natural goodness, and common kind affection toward mankind; from the compassion of a gracious Creator toward his miserable creature, whence all men are concerned and interested therein. Why God's merciful intentions were not explicitly declared and propounded to Socrates and Epictetus, as they were to Judas Iscariot and Simon Magus, is another question, which we may afterward in some manner assoil; at present, it suffices to say, that the overture of mercy made to such wretches doth argue God's kind disposition and good intention toward all men; so it did in St. Ambrose's opinion; who says, that our Lord ought not to pass by the man who should betray him, that all men might take notice, that in SERM. LXXI.

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the choice even of his traitor, he did hold forth a pledge or mark of all men's being to be saved [n].

But the truth of this doctrine will farther appear by the declaration and surveyal of those respects according to which Christ is represented the Saviour of men, as also by considering how useful and conducible to piety this doctrine is, as ministering grounds and obligations, encouragements and motives to the practice of most considerable duties required from all men. But these things must be reserved to another occasion.

[n] Et ideo nec prodituram debuit præterire, ut adverterent omnes, quod in electione etiam proditoris sui servandorum omnium insigne prætendit. *Ambr. de Parad.* 8.

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THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION ASSERTED AND EXPLAINED.

1 Tim. iv. 10.

——*The living God; who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.*

That our Lord Jesus is the Saviour of all men, we have before from plain testimonies of holy Scriptures, and from some arguments grounded there, assayed to shew. The same will be made farther apparent by considering the respects according to which he is such; and those we may first consider generally and in the gross, then survey them more particularly and distinctly. SERM. LXXII.

In general we may say, that our Lord is the Saviour of all men, for that he hath rendered all men *salvabiles*, capable of salvation; and *salvandos*, designed to salvation. For that he hath removed all obstacles peremptorily debarring men from access to salvation, and hath procured competent furtherances to their attainment of it. For that he hath rescued mankind out of that dead and desperate condition, wherein it lay involved; being *the bread of God*, who *hath descended from heaven, that he might give life to the world*, as he saith of himself. For that he hath performed whatever on his part is necessary or fit in order to salvation, antecedently to the acceptance and compliance with those reasonable conditions, which by God's wisdom are required toward the instating men into John vi. 33.

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a full and immediate right to salvation, or to a complete and actual fruition thereof. He made the way to happiness plain and passable; levelling the insuperable cliffs, and filling up the chasms, and rectifying the obliquities, and smoothing the asperities thereof, as the Prophet foretold; so that all men, who would, might conveniently walk therein. [a] He set the doors of paradise wide open, so that who pleased might enter in; all the bonds and restraints under which men lay, he so far loosed, that any man might be free, who would concur to his own liberty and enlargement. All the protection, aid, and encouragement which was needful toward obtaining salvation, he afforded and exhibited to every one, that would embrace and make use of them. In respect to which performances he might be justly esteemed and truly called a *Saviour*, although all men do not in effect become saved. For the estimation and denomination of performances are to be grounded upon their own nature and design, not upon events depending upon the contingent and arbitrary behaviour of men. As he that freely offers a rich boon is no less to be accounted a benefactor and liberal, although his gift be refused, than if it were accepted; as he that opens the prison is to be styled a deliverer, although the captive will not go forth; as he that ministers an effectual remedy, although the patient will not use it, deserves the honour and thanks due to a physician; so is *our Lord* in regard to what he hath performed for men, and offered to them, (being sufficient to prevent their misery, and promote their happiness,) to be worthily deemed, and thankfully acknowledged, their *Saviour*, although not all men, yea although not one man should receive the designed benefit. Accordingly we may observe, that in the Scripture-style, those persons are said to be saved, who are only in a way toward salvation, although they do not arrive thither; and the means conducing to salvation are said to save, although their effect may be defeated; σῳζόμενοι and σεσωσμένοι are terms applied to all Christians, and Christ is *ὁ σώσας, he that hath saved them;*

Luke iii. 5.

Luke iv. 18. Αἰχμαλώτοις ἄφεσιν—.

Acts xvi. 17. Καλαγγέλλουσιν ὁδὸν σωτηρίας,— 1 Cor. i. 18. Acts ii. 47. Rev. xxi. 24. Eph. ii. 5. 2 Tim. i. 9.

[a] Ἡ γῆ ἀντὶ καταράς ηὐλόγηται, ὁ παραδείσος ἠνοίγη, &c. *Athan. in pass.*

and *faith* is said to have *saved them*, although some of them εἰκῇ ἐπίστευσαν, have *believed in vain*, or to no effect, forsaking and renouncing their faith; and *baptism* saves them who partake it, although being washed, they return to their wallowing in the mire. And as our Lord is so termed a *Saviour* in respect to them, who are, by faith and admission into the Church, put into a more near capacity of salvation, as St. Paul speaketh: ἐγγύτερον ἡμῶν ἡ σωτηρία, ἢ ὅτε ἐπιστεύσαμεν, (*Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed;*) so is he in respect of all those, who are in any capacity thereof, although a more remote one.

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1 Cor. xv. 2. Tit. iii. 8. 1 Pet. iii. 21. 2 Pet. ii. 22. Rom. xiii. 11.

But let us now view more nearly and distinctly the respects in which he is *a Saviour of all men*, or the particular benefits and advantages conducing to salvation, which by his performances accrue to mankind; for πάμπολυ τὴν σωτηρίαν ἁπάσῃ χαρίζεται τῇ ἀνθρωπότητι, *In very many ways he bestoweth salvation upon all mankind*, as Clemens Alexandrinus speaks.

Clem. Alex. Pædag. 11.

1. Our Lord is *the Saviour of all men*, as having effected that Almighty God (who upon great provocations was justly displeased and angry with man, who had averted his face, and withdrawn his favour from mankind, whom our apostacy and rebellion had rendered a stranger and an enemy to us) hath deposed his wrath toward mankind, hath conceived a kind affection to it, doth cast a favourable aspect upon it; being thoroughly reconciled and made a friend thereto by our Saviour's mediation. *This is my beloved Son*, ἐν ᾧ εὐδόκησα, *in whom I have been well pleased*, was the attestation given from God to our Lord; the meaning whereof in regard to men, the holy choir of angels did interpret, when after the gladsome report of his birth, (that *great joy, which should be to all people*,) they sang, *Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, good-will toward men.* Which St. Paul farther declareth, when he saith, that by him εὐδόκησε, God pleased to reconcile unto himself all things, upon earth, and in heaven; and when he saith, *That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their sins.* And, *When we*

Matt. iii. 17. xii. 18. Luke ii. 10. 14. Col. i. 20. Eph. i. 10. 2 Cor. v. 19.

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were enemies, saith he again, *we were reconciled to God by the death of his son: When we were enemies*, that implies God antecedently to any man's conversion to have been appeased, and become favourably disposed toward all men, or toward those whom St. Paul speaketh unto, as men; so the reason of the case doth import, and so the analogy which St. Paul immediately after propounds between the results of Adam's transgression and our Saviour's obedience (as to provocation and reconciliation, to condemnation and absolution, to the intents of bringing death and life upon all men) doth enforce. Whence it is, that God declareth himself now to bear an universal good-will to mankind, that he doth earnestly desire the welfare of all men, and is displeased with the ruin of any man; that he *would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth*, because, *there is one Mediator between God and man; that he would not have any perish, but that all should come to repentance:* this he affirms, yea (for the confirmation of our faith and our consolation therein) he in the Evangelical Prophet swears it, *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.* So far toward our salvation is done, God meets us half way; he is reconciled unto us, it remains only that we be reconciled to him; that we hearken to the embassy from him; *Be reconciled to God.*

1 Tim. ii. 4.
2 Pet. iii. 9.
Heb. vi. 16. 18.
Ezek. xxxiii. 11.
2 Cor. v. 20.

2. Jesus is *the Saviour of all men*, by satisfying the divine justice, and repairing God's honour in their behalf. The disloyal and ingrateful behaviour of man had so wronged, so endamaged, so dishonoured God, (had so abused the goodness, disparaged the wisdom, slighted the power, impeached and slurred the authority of his Creator, had so prejudiced all the rights and interests of God,) that by the divine wisdom it was thought fit, that he should not be restored into a capacity of mercy and favour, without a signal compensation made, and an exemplary punishment undergone, whereby the right of God should conspicuously be asserted, his love of goodness and dislike

of wickedness should be remarkably demonstrated [b], and every creature in heaven and earth should be solemnly admonished of its duty; of the reverence and obedience it owes to the great Creator, of the heinous guilt and horrible mischief it incurs by offending him. Such a compensation man was nowise able to make, or fit to undergo such a punishment: our Saviour therefore, out of infinite pity and charity, did undertake both [c]; by a voluntary condescension putting himself into the low and weak state of man; subjecting himself unto that law which man was obliged unto, and suffering the pains which man had deserved. This he was pleased to do in man's behalf, and in our stead; and God was pleased to accept it as so done. [d] His incarnation (or exinanition of himself, as St. Paul calleth it) was an act of that high duty and goodness, that it in virtue surpassed all the obedience, which all creatures were able to render; that it yielded God more satisfaction and more honour than the joint endeavours of all the world could confer. His with so intense charity and cheerfulness fulfilling all righteousness did far more please God, than all our most exact obedience could have done; his enduring bitter pains and disgraces (considering the infinite dignity of his person, his near relation and dearness to God, his perfect innocence and rectitude, yea his immense charity, contentedness, and patience) more than countervailed the punishment due to the sins of all men. Such a payment was more than served to discharge all our debts, (it served to purchase an *overplus* of graces and blessings;) so rich a price was more than sufficient to ransom all the world from captivity; so goodly, so pure, so sweet, so precious a sacrifice might worthily expiate and atone all the guilts of men.

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Phil. ii. 7.

Vide Cyrill. in Eph. Conc. p. 133. Δικαιώσῃ τὴν ἀνθρώπινον φύσιν, &c.

Eph. v. 2. Heb. x. 10. ix. 12. 1 Pet. i. 19.

[b] Λοιπὸν δὲ οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐκέτι κατὰ τὰ ἴδια πάθη μένουσιν, ἁμαρτωλοὶ καὶ νεκροί. ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν τοῦ λόγου δύναμιν ἀναστάντες ἀθάνατοι καὶ ἄφθαρτοι ἀεὶ διαμένουσιν. *Athan. in Arian. Orat.* iv. 485.

[c] Τότε γὰρ καὶ θάνατος, καὶ κατάρα ἐλύετο, καὶ δαίμονες κατησχύνοντο καὶ ἰδιγματίζοντο θριαμβευόμενοι, καὶ τὸ χειρόγραφον τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν τῷ σταυρῷ προσηλῶτο, &c. *Chrys. in Johan.* i. 14.

[d] Ἡ ἔνσαρκος παρουσία τοῦ σωτῆρος θανάτου λύτρου καὶ κτίσεως πάσης σωτηρία γέγονεν. *Athan. ad Adelph. Ep.*

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Now if we inquire what our Saviour did redeem, the consideration of what he paid may, as St. Austin tells [e], help to inform us; *Quæritis quid emerit? Videte quid dederit, et invenite quid emerit. Do ye seek*, saith he, *what he bought? See what he gave, and find what he bought.* However, that as the value and sufficiency of our Lord's performances, so the design and effect thereof did reach so far in regard to man; that his charity was no less extensive than his performance was complete, for our good, the holy Scripture teaches us. For, *He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world*, saith the Baptist. And, *The bread*, saith he, *which I gave is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* And, *He is a propitiation*, saith St. John, *for our sins; and not only for our sins, but for the sins of the whole world.* And, *He is the mediator of God and man, who gave himself* (ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων) *a ransom*, in the stead, and *for all men*, saith St. Paul. And, *He tasted death for every one*, saith the author to the Hebrews. And, He was *that one Man*, who, as it was *expedient*, did *die for the whole nation* of men. And, *God was in him, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their sins.* And, *He came into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might by him be saved*, (or freed from condemnation) And, *As by the offence of one man judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, mercy came upon all to justification of life.* The end we see of our Saviour's performances was, that he might *wipe* off the guilt of sin from all mankind [f], that he might reverse the condemnation passed thereupon, and that he might remove the punishment due thereto; or, that, absolving the first man's sin, he might take it away from the whole race, as St. Athanasius speaks.

Aug. in Ps. xcv.

John i. 29.

John vi. 51.

1 John ii. 2.

1 Tim. ii. 5.

Heb. ii. 9.

John xi. 50. xviii. 14. iii. 17.

2 Cor. v. 19.

John iii. 17.

Rom. v. 18.

All men have sinned, and come short (or are destitute) *of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, by the*

Rom. iii. 23, 24.

[e] Μὴ θαυμάζῃς εἰ κόσμος ὅλος ἐλυτρώθη· οὐ γὰρ ἦν ἄνθρωπος ψιλὸς, ἀλλ' υἱὸς Θεοῦ μονογενὴς, ὁ ὑπεραποθνήσκων, &c. *Cyrill. Cat.* 13.

[f] Ἵνα ἐκείνῳ λύων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, ἀπὸ παντὸς αὐτὴν ἄρῃ τοῦ γένους. *Athan. in pass.*

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redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. He was born under the law, that he might redeem those which were under the law. He that knew no sin was made sin, (was punished and dealt with as a sinner,) *that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, that we might be capable of being esteemed and dealt with as righteous by God upon his account.) So that the result is, divine justice being fully satisfied, and the honour of God fully repaired, (in regard to all sins past and future,) the mouth of vengeance being stopped, the claims of death and hell being evacuated, that general sentence of condemnation (passed upon all the sons of Adam) is suspended, death ceases to reign by any just power, or inevitable necessity; (it is, as St. Paul saith, abolished or abrogated as to any lawful right or necessary force it hath;) the rigour and severity of that law, which upon pain of death exacteth most punctual obedience, (and which consequently doth expose all men to unavoidable condemnation,) is tempered and abated, a foundation is laid for the shewing mercy, and granting pardon. In respect whereto,

Gal. iii. 13. iv. 5. 2 Cor. v. 21. 2 Tim. i. 10. Gal. iii. 10, 12. Rom. x. 5.

3. Our Lord is *the Saviour of all men*, as having in the behalf of mankind transacted and ratified a new covenant, very necessary for, and very conducible to, the salvation of mankind; whereby salvation is made attainable, and is really tendered unto all, upon feasible and equal conditions. According to the purport whereof upon any man (however stained or loaded with the guilt of most heinous transgressions) his embracing the overtures thereof, consenting to, and complying with the terms propounded therein, that is, sincerely believing, and seriously repenting; returning to God with hearty desires and earnest resolutions to serve him; God is ready to dispense mercy and pardon, and immediately receiveth the person into grace and favour with him; yea, the man continuing to perform a faithful, though imperfect, obedience, an obedience suitable to man's natural infirmity and frailty, and proportionable to the assistances afforded him; God farther promiseth to bestow inestimable blessings and re-

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wards of joy and happiness. That covenant which the prophets implied of old, when (beside and beyond what the Jewish law did import) they preached thus: *Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings,* Isa. i. 16. *cease to do evil—though your sins be as scarlet, they shall* Isa. i. 18. *be as white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool.* And, *Let the wicked man forsake his* Isa. lv. 7. *way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him,* Ezek. xviii. 21. *and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* And, *If the wicked man will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die,* (so God in Isaiah and Ezekiel declareth his intention to proceed with men, avowing that way of his to be most equal and fair.) This is that covenant which our Lord commanded his Apostles to declare and propound to all Mark xvi. 15. mankind; *Go ye,* said he to them, *into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature;* That Gospel ac- Luke xxiv. 47. cording to which, as it is expressed in St. Luke, *repentance and remission of sins ought to be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem;* in respect to which, Acts v. 31. St. Peter says, that *God hath exalted* our Lord *to be a prince and a Saviour, to grant repentance to Israel, and remission of sins; to grant repentance,* that is, as the Apostle to the Hebrews and Clemens Romanus speak, μετανοίας τόπον, room for repentance, or capacity to receive pardon upon Phil. iv. 3. repentance; concerning which covenant that Clemens, (the fellow-labourer of St. Paul, and whom Clemens Θαυμασία. Euseb. Alexandrinus calleth an Apostle,) in that excellent, admirable, and almost canonical Epistle to the Corinthians, which, as Eusebius and Jerome tell us, was anciently Ἐν πλείσαις ἐκκλησίαις. Euseb. publicly read in most Churches, hath these remarkably full and clear expressions; g *Let us,* saith he, *look stedfastly*

g Ἀτενίσωμεν εἰς τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἴδωμεν ὡς ἐστι τίμιον τῷ Θεῷ αἷμα αὐτοῦ, ὅτι διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν ἐκχυθὲν, παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ μετανοίας χάριν ὑπήνεγκεν. Ἀτενίσωμεν εἰς γενεὰς πάσας, καὶ καταμάθωμεν ὅτι ἐν γενεᾷ καὶ γενεᾷ μετανοίας τόπον ἔδωκεν ὁ δεσπότης τοῖς βουλομένοις ἐπιστραφῆναι ἐπ' αὐτόν. *Clem. ad Corinth.*

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upon the blood of Christ, and let us see how precious to God his blood is, which being shed for our salvation, did bring the grace of repentance to the whole world. Let us attentively regard all ages, and observe that in every generation the Lord granted place of repentance to them who would turn unto him. This is that *new* and *better covenant, established upon better promises,* (cancelling all former, exceptionable, imperfect, and ineffectual compacts, referring to man's interest and duty,) about which the Apostle to the Hebrews discourseth, and whereof he calleth *our Lord* the *Mediator* and *Sponsor;* in regard to which St. Paul calleth him the *Mediator between God and man;* plainly declaring all men to have a concernment and interest therein; for this supposition he useth as an argument proving God's universal desire of man's conversion and salvation: *Who would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus* [h]. By virtue of which covenant it is, that any such degrees of love or fear toward God, such as men are capable of, are available, any righteous performances, such as our weakness can produce, are acceptable, any honest endeavours do receive countenance and encouragement; and that, as St. Peter observed, *in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted by him;* although his fear of God be not so intense, or pure; his righteousness not so exact and unblameable, as according to extremity of law and duty, they should be. From which covenant so far is any man, according to God's intention and desire, from being excluded, that all men are seriously invited, vehemently exhorted, earnestly entreated to enter into it, and to partake the benefits exhibited thereby. Every man who feeleth himself to want those benefits, and is desirous of mercy and ease from the guilt and burden of his sins, may come and wel-

Heb. viii. 6. ix. 15. xii. 24. vii. 22. 2 Cor. iii. 6.

1 Tim. ii. 4, 5.

Acts x. 35.

[h] Quo dicto ostenditur nullum hominem secundum naturam esse pollutum, sed æqualiter omnes ad Christi Evangelium provocari. *Hier. ad Aug. Epist.* 11.

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come. *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;* so the Evangelical Prophet proclaims; and, *If any man thirsteth, let him come to me and drink*, crieth our Lord; and, *Come to me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, (Δεῦτε πάντες, *Come all to me:* all men therefore, saith Origen, who from the nature of sin do labour and are burdened, are called to that rest; which is with the Word of God[i].) And, *In Christ's name*, saith St. Paul, *we are ambassadors, as though God by us entreateth: we pray you for Christ's sake, be ye reconciled to God;* the purport of which embassy, together with its extent, he otherwhere thus expresseth, *τανῦν παραγγέλλει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πᾶσι παντα χῆ μετανοεῖν, He now proclaimeth to all men every where that they should repent;* he consequently holds forth to all the benefits annexed to repentance. But of this we spake formerly.

Isa. lv. 1. John vii. 37. Matt. xi. 28.

2 Cor. v. 20.

4. Our Lord Jesus is *the Saviour of all men*, as having purchased and procured for them competent aids, whereby they are enabled to perform the conditions required of them in order to their salvation; to acquire a sufficient knowledge of their duty, to subdue their bad inclinations and lusts, to withstand temptations; or briefly, whereby they are enabled sincerely to repent of their sins, and acceptably to perform their due obedience. The truth of this point, taking in the consideration of man's natural state, may by good consequence be inferred from the truth of the points foregoing. If men are naturally so dead in trespasses and sins, so enslaved and sold under sin; so very prone to evil, and averse to good; so dark and blind, that they cannot well discern what they should do; so corrupt and weak, that they cannot perform what they know and confess to be good, (as St. Paul affirmeth men to be,) and consequently are of themselves indisposed to perform the duties acceptable to God[k], and requisite

Eph. ii. 1. Colos. ii. 13. Rom. vii. 14, 15. Eph. v. 8. 2 Cor. iv. 6. 2 Pet. i. 19, &c.

Ὁ ἐπὶ τὰ αἰσχρὰ ὁλισθος αὐτοφυοῦς ἀσθενείας ἔργον. Max. Tyr. Diss. 22.

[i] Πάντες ἐν οἱ ἄνθρωποι διὰ τὴν τῆς ἁμαρτίας φύσιν κοπιῶντες καὶ πεφορτισμένοι, καλοῦνται ἐπὶ τὴν πρὸς τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀνάπαυσιν. *Orig. in Cels.* 3.

[k] Si Deus non operatur in nobis, nullius possumus esse participes virtutis; sine hoc quippe bono nihil est bonum, sine hac luce nihil est lucidum, sine hac sapientia nihil sanum, sine hac justitia nihil rectum. *De Voc. Gent.* i. 8.

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by his appointment toward their salvation, then either our Lord hath provided for them a communication of grace sufficient to countervail or surmount that natural impotency, or all his designs for their good are imperfect or inconsistent, (aiming at an end, without proving requisite means or removing necessary obstructions,) and his performances, whereby the forementioned benefits were procured, do prove ineffectual and fruitless. For God being appeased, and become well-affected to man's salvation, divine justice being satisfied, the rigour of law being mitigated, repentance being made available, and an obedience, agreeable to man's frailty, becoming acceptable, with all other the immediate results of our Saviour's transactions for man, would signify nothing in regard to him, who still lieth under a necessity of sinning, or an inability of performing that which is indispensably exacted from him toward a complete enjoyment of those benefits and favours. In vain is the debt paid, and the bond cancelled, and the prison set open, and liberty proclaimed, and the prisoner called forth, if he be not himself able to knock off the fetters which detain him, and there is no help afforded, by which he may do it. But our Lord hath surely laid his designs more advisedly, and hath prosecuted his work more perfectly. Wherefore we may suppose that a competency of grace and spiritual assistance is by virtue of our Saviour's performances really imparted to every man, qualifying him to do what God requires, and is ready to accept from him in order to his welfare; that our Saviour hath sent abroad his Holy Spirit, (that fountain of all true goodness, of all spiritual light, strength, and comfort,) like the sun, to shine, to warm, to dispense benign influences over the world; although it shineth not so brightly and vigorously, and its presence is not so visible and sensible in one place as another; which Holy Spirit, as it is in its essence omnipresent, so it is likewise in its energy incessantly working (in reasonable measure, right manner, and fit seasons, as wisdom ordereth) upon the minds and affections of men, infusing good thoughts and motions, impressing arguments and motives to good prac-

Τοῖς εὖ βιῶν ἐπανηρημένοις ἰσχὺν πρὸς τὴν λοιπὴν σωτηρίαν ἐμπνεῖ. *Clem. Alex. Strom.* vii. p. 523.

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tice, cherishing and promoting good purposes, checking bad designs, restraining and reclaiming from bad courses. Our reason, however aided by exterior instruction and excitement, being unable to deal with those mighty temptations, oppositions, and discouragements we are to encounter with, he hath given us a wise and powerful Spirit, to guide and advise us, to excite and encourage us, to relieve and succour us in all our religious practice and spiritual warfare. So that all deliverance from the prevalency of temptation and sin we owe to his grace and assistance. That to these purposes the Holy Spirit is plentifully conferred upon all the visible members of the Christian Church, we have plainly declared in Scripture; it was a promise concerning the evangelical times, that God would pour forth his Spirit upon all flesh; the collation thereof is a main part of the evangelical covenant, (into a participation of which every Christian is admitted,) it being the finger of God, whereby God's law is impressed upon their inward parts, and engraven in their hearts, (as the prophets describe the effects of this covenant.) And the end of our Saviour's passion is by St. Paul declared to be, *that the blessing of Abraham might come unto the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith;* that is, that becoming Christians we might partake thereof. And the apostolical ministry (that is, preaching the Gospel, and dispensing the privileges thereof) is therefore styled, διακονία πνεύματος, *the ministry of the Spirit.* And the *tasting of the heavenly gift, and partaking the Holy Ghost*, is, according to the Apostle to the Hebrews, part of the character of a visible Christian, (such a Christian, who might παραπεσεῖν, *fall away*, as he supposeth, and *recrucify the Lord, and expose him to shame:*) and St. Peter makes reception of the Holy Ghost to be a concomitant or consequent of baptism; *Repent*, saith he, *and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise* (or that promise of the Spirit, which is called *the Spirit of promise* peculiar to the Gospel) *is unto you, and to your*

Joel ii. 28. Acts ii. 17.

Jer. xxxi. 33. Ezek. xi. 19. Heb. viii. 11. 2 Cor. iii. 3. Gal. iii. 14.

2 Cor. iii. 8. Heb. vi. 4, 5.

2 Thess. ii. 3.

Acts ii. 38, 39.

Eph. i. 13.

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children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call: (that is, the Holy Spirit is promised to all, how far distant soever in time or place, who shall be invited unto, and shall embrace Christianity;) and accordingly, St. Paul saith of Christians, that *God according to his mercy hath saved us, by the laver of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* And, *Know ye not,* saith he to the Corinthians, *that ye are the temple of God; and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* (that is, Do ye not understand this to be a common property and privilege of Christians, such as ye profess yourselves to be?) And the union of all Christians into *one body* doth, according to St. Paul, result from this *one Spirit,* as a common soul imparted to them all, inanimating and actuating the whole body, and every member thereof. For *by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free, and have been all made to drink of one Spirit.* And it hath been the doctrine constantly with general consent delivered in and by the Catholic church, that to all persons, by the holy mystery of baptism duly initiated into Christianity, and admitted into the communion of Christ's body, the grace of the Holy Spirit is communicated, enabling them to perform the conditions of piety and virtue which they undertake; and continually watching over them for accomplishment of those purposes; which Spirit they are admonished not to resist, to abuse, to grieve, to quench; but to use it well, and improve its grace to the working out their salvation. Thus much concerning the result of our Saviour's performances, in this kind, in respect to the community of Christians, we learn from the holy Scripture and ecclesiastical tradition interpreting it; whence we may discern, that the communications of grace do not always flow from any special love or absolute decree concerning men, but do commonly proceed from the general kindness and mercy of God, by our Lord procured for mankind; and consequently we may thence collect, that somewhat of this nature is to the same purpose, from the same source, and upon the same account, also granted and dispensed

Tit. iii. 5.

1 Cor. iii. 16.

1 Cor. xii. 13.

Eph. iv. 30. 1 Cor. xii. 7. Phil. ii. 13.

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to others. Unto Christians indeed this great benefit (for the reward, the encouragement, the support of their faith; and for promoting their obedience, who are in a nearer capacity and more immediate tendency to salvation) is in a more plentiful measure, and a more conspicuous manner dispensed; but that, besides that dispensation, there have been other (not so plainly signified, or expressly promised, yet really imparted) communications of grace, in virtue of our Saviour's merits, there are (beside the main reason alleged, inferring it from our Lord's being the Saviour of all men) divers good inducements to believe. For even those Christians, to whom upon their faith the Holy Spirit is promised and bestowed, are by previous operations of God's grace (opening their minds, inclining their heart, and tempering their affections) induced to embrace Christianity, faith itself being a gift of God, and a fruit of the Holy Spirit. And before our Saviour's coming all good men have thereby been instructed and enabled to do well. [1]And before any special revelation made, or any particular covenant enacted, (before the inclosure of a particular people or church, the confinement of God's extraordinary presence and providence to one place,) divine grace appears diffused over several nations, being watchful in guiding and moving men to good, and withdrawing them from evil; neither is there reason why such an appropriation of special graces and blessings (upon special reasons) unto some should be conceived to limit or contract God's general favour, or to withdraw his ordinary graces from others. God surely (*who is* πλούσιος ἐν ἐλέει, *rich in mercy*; yea, hath ὑπερβάλλοντα πλοῦτον χάριτος, *excessive riches of grace*) is not so poor or parsimonious, that being liberal to some should render him sparing toward others [m]; his

Eph. ii. 8. Gal. v. 22. Luke xxiv. 45. Matt. xvi. 17. John xvi. 12. 1 Cor. xii. 3.

Eph. ii. 4, 7.

[1] Ex quo perspicuum fit natura omnibus inesse Dei notitiam, nec quemquam sine Christo nasci, et non habere semina in se sapientiæ, justitiæ, reliquarumque virtutum. Unde multi absque fide, et Evangelio Christi vel sapienter faciunt aliqua vel sancte, &c. *Hier. in Galat.* i.

[m] Secundum Scripturam credimus et piissime confitemur, quod nunquam universitati hominum divinæ providentiæ cura defuerit. Quem licet exceptum sibi populum specialibus ad pietatem direxerit institutis, nulli tamen nationi hominum bonitatis suæ dona subtraxit, &c. *De Vocat. Gent.* i. 5.

grace is not like the sea, which if it overflow upon one shore, must therefore retire from another; if it grow deep in one place, must become shallower in another. *Is the Spirit of the Lord straitened?* it is a question in Micah; and, *Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem?* is another question in Isaiah: *No; The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor his ear heavy, that it cannot hear;* at any time, in any place; he is no less able, no less ready than he ever was, to afford help to his poor creatures, wherever it is needful or opportune. As there was of old an Abimelech among the Philistines, whom God by special warning, deterred from commission of sin; a divine Melchisedeck among the Canaanites; a discreet and honest Jethro in Midian; a very religious and virtuous Job in Arabia; who by complying with God's grace, did evidence the commmunication thereof in several nations; so it is not unreasonable to suppose the like cause now, although we cannot by like attestation certify concerning the particular effects thereof. We may at least discern and shew very conspicuous footsteps of divine grace, working in part, and producing no despicable fruits of moral virtue, (of justice and honesty, temperance and sobriety, benignity and bounty, courage and constancy in worthy enterprises, meekness, patience, modesty, prudence, and discretion, yea, of piety and devotion in some manner,) even among Pagans, which if we do not allow to have been in all respects so complete, as to instate the persons endued with them, or practisers of them, in God's favour, or to bring them to salvation[n]; yet those qualities and actions (in degree, or in matter at least, so good and so conformable to God's law) we can hardly deny to have been the gifts of God, and the effects of divine grace; they at least themselves acknowledged so much; for, *Nulla*

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Mic. ii. 7.

Isa. l. 2. lix. 1.

Gen. xx. 3. xxvi. 8.

Exod. xviii.

Καθ' ἑαυτὴν ἐδικαίᾳ ποτὲ καὶ ἡ φιλοσοφία τοὺς Ἕλληνας. *Clem. Alex.*

[n] Mortalem vitam honestare possunt, æternam conferre non possunt. *Prosper in Collat.* cap. 26.

(Prodesse ad salutem. *Aug. Prosper, Fulgent, &c.*)

Nemo vir magnus sine aliquo afflatu divino unquam fuit. *Cic. de Nat. Deorum* ii. *sub fin.*

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sine Deo mens bona est, No mind is good without God, said Seneca [o]; and, Θείᾳ μοίρᾳ φαίνεται παραγιγνομένη ἡ ἀρετὴ, οἷς παραγίνεται, *Virtue appears to proceed from a divine dispensation to them who partake of it,* said Socrates [p]; and, Αἱ ἄριστα φύσεις, ἀμφισβητήσιμοι ἐν μεταίῳ τῆς ἄκρας ἀρετῆς πρὸς τὴν ἐσχάτην μοχθηρίαν καθωρμισμέναι, δέονται ξυναγωνίστε Θεοῦ καὶ ξυλλήπτορος τῆς ἐπὶ τὰ δεξιὰ τὰ κρείττω ἑρπῆς καὶ χειραγωγίας. *The best natured souls being constituted in the middle between the highest virtue and extreme wickedness, do need God to be their succourer and assistant in the inclining and leading them to the better side;* saith Max. Tyr. xxii. St. Austin himself, who seems the least favourable in his judgment concerning their actions and state, who calls their virtues but images and shadows of virtue *(non veras, sed verisimiles)* splendid sins; acknowledges those virtuous dispositions and deeds to be the gifts of God, to be laudable, to procure some reward, to avail so far, that they, because of them, shall receive a more tolerable and mild treatment from divine justice; which things considered, such persons do at least, by virtue of grace imparted to them, [q] obtain some part of salvation, or an imperfect kind of salvation, which they owe to our Lord, and in regard whereto he may be called in a sort their Saviour.

—Dei dona. Epist. 130. Aug.

But although the torrent of natural pravity hath prevailed so far, as that we cannot assign or nominate any (among those who have lived out of the pale) who certainly or probably have obtained salvation, yet doth it not follow thence, that a sufficient grace was wanting to them. The most universal practice contrary to the intents of grace doth not evince a defect of grace. For we see that the same cause hath in a manner universally overborne

[o] Sen. Ep. 73.

—Quæ secundum justitiæ regulam non solum vituperare non possumus, sed etiam merito recteque laudamus. *Aug. de Spir. et Lit.* cap. 27.

[p] Plat. Menon. ad finem.

[q] Tolerabilius puniuntur. Minus Fabricius quam Catilina punietur, &c. —non veras virtutes habendo, sed a veris virtutibus non plurimum deviando. *Aug.*

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and defeated other means and methods designed and dispensed by God for the instruction and emendation of mankind.

God's Spirit did long strive with the inhabitants of the *old world:* yet no more than one family was bettered or saved thereby. God by his good Spirit instructed the Israelites in the wilderness, as Nehemiah saith, yet no more than two persons did get into Canaan: that people afterward had afforded to them great advantages of knowledge and excitements to piety, (so that God intimates, that he could not have done more for them, in that regard, than he had done.) Yet, *There is none that understandeth, or seeketh after God*, was a complaint in the best times. The Pagans had the means of knowing God, as St. Paul affirmeth, yet generally they grew vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; from which like cases and examples we may infer, that divine grace might be really imparted, although no effect correspondent to its main design were produced. Neither, because we cannot allege any evident instances of persons converted or saved by virtue of this grace, (this *parcior occultiorque gratia, more sparing and secret grace*, as the good writer *de Vocatione Gentium* calls it) are we forced to grant there were none such; but as in Israel when Elias said, the children of Israel have *forsaken God's covenant, thrown down his altars, and slain his prophets with the sword; and I, I only am left;* there were yet *in Israel*, living closely, *seven thousand knees, who had not bowed to Baal:* so among the generations of men, commonly overgrown with ignorance and impiety, there might, for all that we can know, be divers persons indiscernible to common view, who, by complying with the influences of God's grace, have obtained competently to know God, and to reverence him; sincerely to love goodness, and hate wickedness; with an honest heart, to observe the laws of reason and righteousness, in such a manner and degree which God might accept; so that the grace afforded might not only *sufficere omnibus in testimonium, (suffice to convince all men,)* but *quibusdam in remedium, (to correct and cure some,)* as that

Gen. vi. 3. 1 Pet. iii. 20.

Neh. ix. 20.

Isa. v. 4. Psal. xiv.

Rom. i. 21.

1 Kings xix. 14, 18.

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writer *de Voc. Gent.* speaks. The consideration of God's nature and providence doth serve farther to persuade the truth of this assertion. If God be *rich in mercy* and bounty toward all his creatures, as such, (and such he frequently asserts himself to be,) if he be all-present and all-provident, as he certainly is, how can we conceive him to stand as an unconcerned spectator of what men do, in affairs of this consequence? That he should be present beholding men to run precipitantly into desperate mischiefs and miscarriages, without offering to stay or obstruct them; struggling with their vices and follies, without affording them any relief or furtherance; assaulted by strong temptations, without yielding any support or succour; panting after rest and ease, without vouchsafing some guidance and assistance toward the obtaining them? How can he see men invincibly erring and inevitably sinning, without making good what the Psalmist says of him: *Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way;* to withhold his grace in such cases, seemeth inconsistent with the kind and compassionate nature of God, especially such as now it stands, being reconciled to mankind, by the *Mediator of God and men, Christ Jesus.* He also, that is so bountiful and indulgent toward all men in regard to their bodies and temporal state; *who preserveth their life from destruction,* who protecteth them continually from danger and mischief; *who openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desires of every living thing; who satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness;* who, as St. Paul speaketh, *filleth men's hearts with food and gladness;* is it likely that he should altogether neglect their spiritual welfare, and leave their souls utterly destitute of all sustenance or comfort; that he should suffer them to lie fatally exposed to eternal death and ruin, without offering any means of redress or recovery? To conceive so of God, seemed very unreasonable even to a Pagan philosopher: *Do you think,* saith Max. Tyrius, *that divination, poetry, and such like things, are by divine inspiration insinuated into men's souls, and that virtue* (so much better, and so much rarer a thing)

Psal. cxlv. 9.

Psal. xxv. 8.

Psal. ciii. 4. cxlv. 16. cvii. 9.

Acts xiv. 17.

Max. Tyr. Diss. 22.

is the work of mortal art? [r] *You have forsooth a worthy conceit of God, who take him to be liberal in bestowing mean things, and sparing of better things. He that,* as St. Paul saith, *giveth to all men life, breath, and all things,* will he withhold from any that best of gifts, and most worthy of him to give, that grace whereby he may be able to serve him, to praise him, to glorify him, yea, to please and gratify him; to save a creature and subject of his; the thing wherein he so much delighteth? From hence also, that God hath vouchsafed general testimonies of his goodness, inducements to seek him, footsteps whereby he may be discovered and known, a light of reason and law of nature written upon men's hearts; attended with satisfactions, and checks of conscience; so many dispositions to knowledge and obedience, as St. Paul teacheth us; we may collect that he is not deficient in communicating interior assistances, promoting the good use and improvement of those talents; for that otherwise the bestowing them is frustraneous and useless; being able to produce no good effect; yea, it rather is an argument of unkindness, being apt only to produce an ill effect in those upon whom it is conferred; an aggravation of sin, an accumulation of guilt and wrath upon them. SERM. LXXII. Acts xvii. 25. Acts xiv. 17. xvii. 27. Rom. i. 19. ii. 15.

If it be said, that having such grace is inconsistent with the want of an explicit knowledge of Christ, and of faith in him; why may not we say, that as probably (so St. Chrysostom, *vid. Mont. App.* I.) most good people before our Lord's coming received grace without any such knowledge or faith; that as to idiots and infants, our Saviour's meritorious performances are applied (in a manner unknowable by us) without so much as a capacity to know or believe any thing; that so we (to whom God's judgments are inscrutable, and his ways uninvestigable) know not how grace may be communicated, unto, and Christ's merits may avail for other ignorant persons? in respect to whom we may apply that of St. John; *The* Rom. xi. 33. John i. 5.

[r] Ἡ πολλῆ ἄξιον νομίζεις τὸ Θεῖον, πρὸς μὲν τὰ φαῦλα καλῶς ἐ ἀφθόνως παρεσκευασμένον, πρὸς δὲ τὰ κρείττω ἄπορον.

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light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. However, that such persons may have a grace capacifying them to arrive to that knowledge and faith, to which fuller communications of grace are promised; so that in reasonable esteem (as we shall presently shew) the revelation of evangelical truth, and the gift of faith, may be supposed to be conferred upon all men—so that we may apply to them that in the Revelation; *Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in unto him, and sup with him, and he with me;* (that is, Behold, I allure every man to the knowledge and embracing of Christianity; if any man will open his mind and heart, so as to comply with my solicitations, I am ready to bestow upon him the participation of evangelical mercies and blessings:) and to such persons those promises and rules in the Gospel may appertain; *He that asketh receiveth; he that seeketh findeth; to him that knocketh it shall be opened: The heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him. He that is* ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ πιστὸς, *(faithful in the use of the least grace,)* shall be rewarded. And, *To him that hath* (or that diligently keepeth and husbandeth what he hath) *shall more be given.*

Rev. iii. 20. Εἰ τυφλοὶ ἦτε, οὐκ ἂν εἴχετε ἁμαρτίαν.

John ix. 41. xv. 22.

Luke xi. 10, 13.

Luke xix. 17.

Luke xix. 26.

And how God sometimes dealeth with such persons the eminent instances of St. Paul and Cornelius do shew. But concerning this point I spake somewhat before, and have perhaps been too large now; I shall only add that saying of the wise writer *de Voc. Gen. A pious mind*, saith he, *should not, I think, be troubled at that question, which is made concerning the conversion of all, or not all men; if we will not obscure those things which are clear, by those things which are secret; and while we wantonly insist upon things shut up, we be not excluded from those which are open and plain* [s]. Which in effect is the same with this; that since we are plainly taught, that our Lord is the Sa-

[s] Puto quod pius sensus non debeat in ea quæstione turbari, quæ de omnium et non omnium hominum conversione generatur; si ea quæ clara sunt non de his quæ occulta sunt obscuremus, et dum procaciter insistimus clausis excludamur ab apertis, &c. *Lib.* i. *cap.* 8.

viour of all men; and it is consequent thence, that he hath procured grace sufficiently capacifying all men to obtain salvation; we need not perplex the business, or obscure so apparent a truth, by debating how that grace is imparted; or by labouring overmuch in reconciling the dispensation thereof with other dispensations of Providence. SERM. LXXII.

SERMON LXXIII.

THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION ASSERTED AND EXPLAINED.

1 Tim. iv. 10.

——*The living God; who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.*

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5. Jesus is *the Saviour of all men*, as the conductor of all men into and through the way of salvation. It is a very proper title, and most due to those brave captains, who by their wisdom and valour have freed their country from straits and oppressions. So were those judges and princes, who anciently delivered Israel from their enemies, commonly styled: *In the time of their trouble*, say the Levites in Nehemiah, *when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and, according to thy manifold mercies, thou gavest them Saviours, who saved them out of the hand of the enemy;* so are Othniel and Ehud particularly called; and Moses signally: *The same*, saith St. Stephen of him, *did God send to be ἄρχοντα καὶ λυτρωτὴν, a Commander and a Saviour* (or Redeemer) *to the children of Israel;* for that he by a worthy and happy conduct did free them from the Egyptian slavery. And thus was Demetrius by the Athenians (for his delivering them from the Macedonian subjection, and restoring their liberty to them) entitled, *εὐεργέτης καὶ σωτὴρ, a benefactor and saviour.* Thus with greatest reason is Jesus so called, as being *ἀρχηγὸς τῆς σωτηρίας, the Captain of Salvation*, (so he is called by the Apostle to the Hebrews,) *ἀρχηγὸς ζωῆς, (the Captain of*

Neh. ix. 27.

Judg. iii. 9, 15.

Acts vii. 35.

Heb. ii. 10.

Acts iii. 15.

Life, as St. Peter names him, the chief Leader unto eternal life,) ἀρχηγὸς πίστεως, (*the Captain of our Faith*; he that hath revealed that saving doctrine, which is the power of God to salvation:) and these titles we have conjoined by St. Peter in the Acts; *Him hath God exalted*, ἀρχηγὸν καὶ σωτῆρα, *as a Captain and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins.* This he is to us several ways, by direction both instructive and exemplary; by his protection and governance; by his mating and quelling the enemies of man's salvation; which things more specially and completely he hath performed in respect to faithful Christians, yet in a manner also he hath truly done them for and toward all men; as we shall distinctly consider.

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Heb. xii. 2. Rom. i. 16. Acts v. 31.

6. Jesus is *the Saviour of all men*, we say, as having perfectly discovered and demonstrated the way and means of salvation; the gracious purposes of God concerning it; the duties required by God in order to it; the great helps and encouragements to seek it; the mighty determents from neglecting it; the whole will of God, and concernment of man in relation thereto; briefly, all saving truths he hath revealed unto all men: *mysteries* of truth, which *were hidden from ages and generations*, which no fancy of man could invent, no understanding could reach, no reason could by discussion clear, (concerning the nature, providence, will, and purpose of God; the nature, original, and state of man; concerning the laws and rules of practice, the helps thereto, the rewards thereof, whatever is important for us to know in order to happiness,) he did plainly discover, and bring to light; he did with valid sorts of demonstration assert and confirm. The doing which, (as having so much efficacy toward salvation, and being ordinarily so necessarily thereto,) is often called *saving*; as particularly by St. James; when he saith, *He that turns a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death.* And by St. Paul; *Take heed to thy word and doctrine; for so doing thou shalt save thyself, and thy hearers.* That our Lord hath thus (according to his design, and according to reasonable esteem) *saved all men*,

Col. i. 26. Rom. xvi. 25.

Jam. v. 20.

1 Tim. iv. 16.

1 Cor. ix. 22.

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we are authorised by the holy Scripture to say; for he is there represented to be *the light of the world; the true light that enlighteneth every man coming into the world: the day-spring from on high, which hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death, and to guide our feet in the way of peace.* By him *the saving grace of God hath appeared unto all men.* By him (as Isaiah prophesied, and St. John the Baptist applied it) *all flesh did see the salvation of God.* Of him it was also foretold, as St. Paul teacheth us, *I have set thee for the light of the nations that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. Coming he preached peace τοῖς μακρὰν καὶ τοῖς ἐγγὺς* (*longe lateque*) *to them that were far, and them that were near*, that is, *to all men every where. While I am in the world*, said he, *I am the light of the world*; shining, like the sun, indifferently unto all; and when he withdrew his corporal presence, he farther virtually diffused his light, for he sent his messengers with a general commission and command to teach all men concerning the benefits procured for them, and the duties required from them, *Going into the world, make all nations disciples, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. Going into the world, preach the Gospel unto every creature*, (or, *to the whole creation:* so it ought to be.) *That in his name should be preached repentance and remission of sins unto all nations.* And such was the tenor of the apostolical commission; *Thou shalt be witness for him toward all men*, said Ananias to St. Paul. Accordingly, in compliance with those orders, did the Apostles, in God's name, instruct and admonish all men, plainly teaching, seriously inviting to, strongly persuading, and earnestly entreating all men to embrace the truth, and enjoy the benefits of the Gospel, and consequently to be saved: *The times of ignorance*, saith St. Paul, *God having winked at, doth now invite all men everywhere to repent:* and, *We are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God—We pray you*, you as members of that world, which God was in Christ reconciling to himself; and, *We preach*

Rom. xi.
2 Tim. iii. 15. σοφίσαι εἰς σωτηρίαν.
John viii. 12. i. 9.
Luke i. 79.
Tit. ii. 11. iii. 4.
2 Tim. i. 10.
Luke iii. 6.
Acts xiii. 47.
Eph. ii. 17.
John ix. 5.
Mat xxviii. 19, 20.
Mark xvi. 15.
Luke xxiv. 47.
Acts xxii. 15. xxvi. 17.
Acts xvii. 30.
2 Cor. v. 20.
Coles. i. 28.

Christ——warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus, (or, *render every man a good Christian.)* Thus was the Gospel, according to our Saviour's intent and order, preached, as St. Paul saith of it, ἐν πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν, *in the whole creation under heaven;* thus did God shew, that he would *have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth;* whence our Lord, (in regard to the nature and design of his performance in this kind) is the common Saviour, as the common master of truth, and enlightener of the world, and proclaimer of God's will to mankind. SERM. LXXIII. Acts ii. 40. Col. i. 23. 1 Tim. ii. 4. John i. 18.

If now it be inquired or objected; why then is not the Gospel revealed unto all men? How comes it to pass, that no sound of this saving word, no glimpse of this heavenly light, doth arrive to many nations? How can so general and large intention consist with so particular and sparing execution? What benefit can we imagine them capable to receive from this performance of our Saviour, who still do sit in total ignorance of the Gospel, in darkness, and the shadow of death? *How can they call upon him in whom they believe not? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?* Luke i. 74. Matt. iv. 16. Rom. x. 14.

To this suggestion I answer,

1. That God's intentions are not to be interpreted, nor his performances estimated by events, depending on the contingency of human actions, but by his own declarations and precepts, together with the ordinary provision of competent means, in their own nature sufficient to produce those effects which he declares himself to intend or to perform. What he reveals himself to design, he doth really design it; what he says, that he performeth; he (according to moral esteem, that is, so far as to ground duties of gratitude and honour, proceedings of justice and reward) doth perform, although the thing upon other accounts be not effected.

Thus, for instance, God would have all men to live together here in peace, in order, in health, conveniently, comfortably, cheerfully; according to reason, with virtue

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and justice; and in the best state toward happiness: for these purposes he hath endued them with reasonable faculties, he hath engraven on their minds a natural law, he hath furnished them with all sorts of instruments and helps conducible to those ends; he promoteth them by dispensations of providence, and, probably, by internal influences of grace: yet often all those means, by the perverseness and stupidity of men, do prove ineffectual, so that wars, disorders, diseases, vices, iniquities and oppressions, troubles and miseries, do commonly abound in the world. Likewise God desires, that in his church, knowledge and piety, peace and charity, and good order should grow and flourish; to which purposes he hath appointed teachers to instruct, and governors to watch over his people: he hath obliged each man to advise and admonish his brother; he hath declared holy precepts and rules of practice; he hath propounded vast encouragements and rewards, and threatened dreadful punishments; he hath promised and doth afford requisite assistances; being himself always present and ready to promote those ends by his grace: yet notwithstanding, by the voluntary neglect or abuse of these means, (the guides being blind, negligent, unfaithful; or the people being indocile, sluggish, refractory; or both perverted with bad affections,) often ignorance, error, and impiety prevail, love is cool and dead, schisms and factions are rife in the church. Which events are not to be conceived derogatory to God's good-will and good intentions, or to his kind and careful providence toward men; but we are notwithstanding to esteem and acknowledge him the author and donor of those good things; in respect to them no less blessing and praising him, than if they were really accomplished by man's concurrence and compliance; he having done his part in that due measure and manner which wisdom prompts; having indeed done the same, as when they are effected. So God having expressly declared, that he would have all men to know and embrace the Gospel, having made a universal promulgation thereof, having sent forth Apostles to disseminate it every where, having obliged every man to confer his best

endeavour toward the propagation thereof; if by the want of fidelity, zeal, or industry in them, to whom this care is intrusted, or upon whom this duty is incumbent; or if by the carelessness and stupidity of those, who do not regard what is done in the world; or if by men's voluntary shutting their eyes, or stopping their ears, (as the Jews did of old to the prophetical instructions and admonitions,) God's heavenly truth becometh not universally known, it is not reasonable to impute this defailance to God, or to conceive him therefore not universally to desire and design men's instruction and salvation consequent thereon. Let me, for the illustration of this matter, put a case, or propound a similitude. Suppose a great kingdom, consisting of several provinces, should have revolted from their sovereign; disclaiming his authority, neglecting and disobeying his laws; that the good prince, out of his goodness and pity toward them, (and upon other good considerations moving him thereto, suppose the mediation of his own son,) instead of prosecuting them with deserved vengeance, should grant a general pardon and amnesty, in these terms, or upon these conditions; that whoever of those rebels willingly should come in, acknowledge his fault, and promise future loyalty, or obedience to his laws declared to them, should be received into favour, have impunity, enjoy protection, and obtain rewards from him. Farther, for the effectuating this gracious intent, suppose that he should appoint and commissionate messengers, empowering and charging them to divulge the purport of this act of grace to all the people of that kingdom. Admit now, that these messengers should go forth and seat themselves only in some provinces of that kingdom, proclaiming this universal pardon (universal as to the design, and as to the tenor thereof) only in those, neglecting others; or that striving to propagate it farther, they should be rejected and repelled; or that from any the like cause the knowledge thereof should not reach to some remoter provinces; it is plain, that indeed the effect of that pardon would be obstructed by such a carriage of the affair; but

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the tenor of that act would not thereby be altered; nor would the failure in execution (consequent upon the minister's or the people's misbehaviour) detract from the real amplitude of the prince's intent; no more than the wilful incredulity, refusal, or non-compliance of some persons, where the business is promulged and notified, would prejudice the same. It is plain the prince meant favourably toward all, and provided carefully for them; although by accident (not imputable to him) the designed favours and benefits do not reach all. The case so plainly suits our purpose, that I need not make any application. The holy Fathers do by several like similitudes endeavour to illustrate this matter, and somewhat to assoil the difficulty. They compare our Saviour to the sun [a], who shines indifferently to all the world, although there be some private corners and secret caves, to which his light doth not come; although some shut their windows or their eyes, and exclude it; although some are blind, and do not see it. [b] That mystical Sun of Righteousness, saith St. Ambrose, is risen to all, came to all, did suffer and rose again for all——but if any one doth not believe in Christ, he defrauds himself of the general benefit. As if one shutting the windows should exclude the beams of the sun, the sun is not therefore not risen to all. [c] They compare our Lord to a physician, who professes to relieve and cure all that shall have recourse to his help; but doth cure only

[a] Ἀκούσατε οὖν οἱ μακρὰν· ἀκούσατε οἱ ἐγγύς· οὐκ ἀπεκρύβη τινὰς ὁ λόγος· φῶς ἐστι κοινὸν, ἐπιλάμπει πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις· ἀδιὴς Κιμμέριος ἐν λόγῳ. *Clem. Alex. Protrep.*

Hear ye that are far: hear ye that are near: the word is not hid to any: it is a common light: it shineth to all men; there is no Cimmerian in the Word.

[b] Mysticus Sol ille justitiæ omnibus ortus est, omnibus venit, omnibus passus est, et omnibus resurrexit—si quis autem non credit in Christum, generali beneficio se fraudat, ut si quis clausis fenestris radios solis excludat, non ideo sol non ortus est omnibus, &c. *Amb. in Psal.* cxviii. *Ser.* viii.

Si dies omnibus æqualiter nascitur, et si sol super omnes pari et æquali luce diffunditur, quanto magis Christus Sol et dies verus, in Ecclesia sua lumen vitæ æternæ pari æqualitate largitur. *Cypr. Epist.* 76.

[c] Nunquid non medicus idcirco proponit in publico, ut omnes se ostendat velle salvare si velint. *Ambr.* i. tom. 2.

those who seek for remedy, and are willing to take the medicine; because all, saith St. Ambrose again, do not desire cure, but most do shun it, lest the ulcer should smart by medicaments; therefore *volentes curat, non astringit invitos;* he cures only the willing, doth not compel those that are unwilling; they only receive health, who desire medicine [d]. Evangelical grace, say they, is like a fountain standing openly, to which all men have free access; at which all men may quench their thirst, if they will inquire after it, and go thereto. *The fountain of life*, saith Arnobius, *is open to all; nor is any man hindered or driven from the right of drinking it* [e]. The covenant of grace is, say they, a door standing open to all, whereinto all have liberty to enter—*When an entrance*, saith St. Chrysostom, *being opened to all, and there being nothing that hinders, some being wilfully naught abide without, they have no other but their own wickedness to impute their destruction unto* [f].

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And again he puts the question, *If Christ enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, how is it that so many remain unenlightened?* &c. To which he answers, That *if some, wilfully shutting the eyes of their minds, will not receive the beams of this light, it is not from the nature of light that those remain still in darkness, but from the wickedness of those who wilfully deprive themselves of the gift of it*, &c. [g]

[d] Venit—ut vulnera nostra curaret, sed quia non omnes medicinam expetunt, sed plerique refugiunt, ne medicamentis compungatur vis ulceris, ideo volentes, &c. *Ambr. de David.* iii. 11.

[e] Patet omnibus fons vitæ, neque ab jure potandi quisquam prohibetur, aut pellitur. *Arnob.* lib. 2.

[f] Ὅταν τῆς εἰσόδου πᾶσιν ἀνεῳγμένης, καὶ μηδενὸς τοῦ κωλύοντος ὄντος, ἐθελοκακήσαντές τινες ἔξω μένωσι, παρ' οὐδένα ἕτερον, ἀλλ' ἢ παρὰ τὴν οἰκείαν πονηρίαν ἀπόλλυνται. *Chrys. in Joh.* i. *Homil.* 7.

[g] Εἰ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον, πῶς ἀφώτιστοι μεμενήκασι τοσοῦτοι; οὐ γὰρ ὃλ πάντες ἐπέγνωσαν τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὸ σέβας· πῶς οὖν φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον; τόγε εἰς αὐτὸν ἦκον· εἰ δέ τινες ἐκόντες τὰς τῆς διανοίας ὀφθαλμοὺς μύσαντες, οὐκ ἠθέλησαν παραδέξασθαι τοῦ φωτὸς τούτου τὰς ἀκτῖνας, οὐ παρὰ τὴν τοῦ φωτὸς φύσιν ἡ σκότωσις ἐκείνοις, ἀλλὰ παρὰ τὴν κακουργίαν τῶν ἑκοντὶ ἀποστερούντων ἑαυτοὺς τῆς δωρεᾶς· ἡ μὲν γὰρ χάρις εἰς πάντας ἐκπέχυται—πάντως δὲ ἡμῖν προσ-

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St. Gregory Nazianzen resembles the grace of baptism (as to its community and freedom of use) to the breathing of the air, to the spreading of light, to the vicissitude of seasons, to the aspect of the creation [h]; things most obvious and common to all.

If this answer do not fully satisfy, I adjoin farther,

2. That God, beside that ordinary provision, is ready to interpose extraordinarily in disclosing his truth to them who are worthy of such favour, and fit to receive it; and that God's general desire and design of revealing his truth to all men is very well consistent with his providential (not only negative and permissive, but even positive and active) withholding the discovery thereof from some persons, yea some nations; for that neither his wisdom, goodness, or justice might permit him, that he should impart that revelation to such persons whom he seeth altogether indisposed to comply therewith, and unfit to profit thereby; who have extremely abused the lesser graces, and not improved or misimproved the lesser talents afforded them; detained inferior truths in unrighteousness, and *have not liked to retain God in their knowledge*, have therefore justly been delivered up to a reprobate sense; who have so depraved their minds with wicked prejudices and affections, that the truth being offered to them, they would certainly either stupidly neglect it, or scornfully reject it; or if admitting it in shew, would unworthily abuse it; so that from the imparting the means of knowing it, no glory to God, no benefit to man would accrue, but rather contempt of God and prejudice to men would ensue upon it: there are some persons of that wicked and *gigantic* disposition, (contracted by evil practice,) that, should one offer to instruct them in truth, or move them to piety, would be ready to say with Polyphemus in Homer, *Odyss. i.* 273, 4.

Rom. i. 18, 28.

Isa. xxx. 10.

ἐμένη καὶ μετὰ τῆς ἴσης καλοῦσα τιμῆς· οἱ δὲ μὴ θέλοντες ἀπολαῦσαι τῆς δωρεᾶς ταύτης, ἑαυτοῖς δίκαιοι ταύτην ἂν εἶεν λογίσασθαι τὴν πήρωσιν. *Chrys. in Joh.* i. *Homil.* 7.

[h] ——ὡς ἀέρος πνεῦσιν, ὡς φωτὸς χύσιν, καὶ ὡρῶν ἀλλαγὰς, ϗ κτίσεως θέαν——. *Naz. Orat.* 40.

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Νήπιος εἶς, ὦ ξεῖν', ἢ τηλόθεν εἰλήλουθας,
Ὅς με θεοὺς κέλεαι ἢ δείδιμεν, ἢ ἀλέασθαι.

Friend, you are a fool, or a great stranger to me,
Who advisest me to fear or regard the Deity.

Or (which is the same) with Pharaoh: *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go,* (or neither will I do as you in God's name admonish me;) who, like that unhappy prince, by no efficacy of arguments, no wonders of power are to be convinced of their folly, or converted from their wickedness: some, like those of Chorazin and Bethsaida, whom not all the powerful discourses spoken to them, all the mighty works done in them, sufficient to have brought Tyre and Sidon to repentance, can induce to mind or obey the truth: unto which sort of people (except upon some particular occasions, and for special reasons) it is not expedient that divine truth should be exposed. We may also observe how our Lord, being asked by St. Jude a question like to ours; *Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not to the world?* thus resolves it: *If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him:* implying the ordinary reason of God's making a difference in the discoveries of himself to be the previous disposition and behaviours of men toward God; and interpretatively toward our Lord himself.

Exod. v. 2. Prov. i. 24. Luke x. 13. John xiv. 22.

That God doth commonly observe this method (plainly suitable to divine justice, wisdom, and goodness) to dispense the revelation of his truth according to men's disposition to receive it, and aptness to make a fruitful and worthy use of it, *to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance,* as St. John Baptist spake; and to withhold it from those who are indisposed to admit it, or unfit to profit by it; we may from divers express passages and notable instances (beside many probable intimations) of Scripture learn. We may on the one hand observe, that those whom our Saviour did choose to call, were persons disposed easily upon his call to comply; to forsake their fathers and their nets; to leave their

Matt. iii. 8. 1 Cor. xii. 7. Matt. iv. 18. John i. 24, 37. Matt. xix. 27.

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receipts of custom; to relinquish all, (relations, occupations, estates,) and to follow him; faithful Israelites, without guile, like Nathaniel, (that is, as is probably conjectured, St. Bartholomew;) men honestly devout, and charitable, like Zaccheus; that he chose to converse with publicans and sinners, men apt to be convinced of their errors, and touched with the sense of their sins; apt to see their need of mercy and grace, and therefore ready to entertain the overtures of them; that he blesses God for revealing his mysteries to babes, (to innocent and well meaning, imprejudicate and uncorrupted persons,) such as if men were not, they could in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven, or become Christians; those *poor in spirit, of whom is the kingdom of heaven;* those *foolish things* which God chooses as most fit objects of his mercy and grace; that he enjoined his disciples, in their travels for the promulgation and propagation of the Gospel, to inquire concerning the worthiness or fitness of persons, and accordingly to make more close applications to them: *Into what city or village ye enter, inquire who therein is worthy;* and entering in abide there. Of this proceeding we have a notable instance in Cornelius, who for his honest piety (correspondent to the proportion of knowledge vouchsafed him) was so acceptable to God, that in regard thereto he obtained from him the revelation of truth in a peculiar and extraordinary manner. And St. Paul was another most remarkable example thereof; who for the like reason was so wonderfully called, as himself intimates, describing himself to have been ζηλωτὴς Θεοῦ, *zealously affected toward God, according to the righteousness in the law, blameless;* one that had *continually behaved himself with all good conscience toward* God; who even in the persecution of God's truth did proceed with an honest meaning, and according to his conscience, for which cause he saith, that God had mercy on him; foreseeing how willingly he would embrace the truth, and how earnestly promote it. We may also observe, how in the acts of the Apostles, the Holy Spirit commonly directed the Apostles to such places, where a competent number of people were well disposed to receive the truth; who were εὖ διάκειται εἰς

John i. 47. Luke xix. 8, 9. Matt. xxi. 31. Luke v. 31. Matt. xviii. 3. xix. 14. v. 3. 1 Cor. i. 27. Matt. x. 11. Acts xxii. 3. xxiii. 1. Πεπολίτευμαι. Phil. iii. 6. Acts xxvi. 9. Gal. i. 14. Acts xxvi. 1 Tim. i. 3. Luke ix. 62.

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τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ, *well disposed to the kingdom of heaven,* and consequently by God's foresight (τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον) *ordained to have the word of eternal life* (the τὸ σωτήριον Θεοῦ, as it is in a parallel place called) discovered to them; such people as the Bereans, men ingenuous and tractable; who consequently entertained the word, μετὰ πάσης προθυμίας, with all promptitude and alacrity. To such persons God sometimes by extraordinary revelation directed the Apostles to preach; as to the Corinthians, in respect to whom the Lord spake to St. Paul in a vision, saying, *Fear not, but speak, and be not silent; for I am with thee, because* πολύς ἐστί μοι λαὸς, *there is for me much people in this city; much people* whom I see disposed to comply with my truth. So in behalf of the Macedonians, ἀνήρ τις Μακεδών, *a certain man of Macedonia,* was in a vision seen to St. Paul, *exhorting him and saying, Passing into Macedonia, help us.* Thus on that hand doth God take special care that his truth be manifested to such as are fitly qualified to embrace it and use it well: thus is God ready to make good that answer of Pothinus (Bishop of Lions, and immediate successor to St. Irenæus) to the prefect, who asking him *who was the Christians' God,* was answered, Ἐὰν ᾖς ἄξιος γνώσῃ, *If thou be worthy, thou shalt know;* thus, as the Wise Man divinely saith, the divine Wisdom, ἀξίους αὐτῆς περιέρχεται ζητοῦσα, *goeth about seeking such as are worthy of her; shewing herself favourable unto them in their ways, and meeteth them in every thought.*

Acts xiii. 48. xvii. 11. xxviii. 28.

Acts xviii. 9, 10.

Acts xvi. 9.

Euseb. v. 1.

Wisd. vi. 16.

And on the other hand, that God withholds the special discoveries of his truth, upon account of men's indispositions and demerits, may likewise very plainly appear. We may suppose our Lord to have observed himself, what he ordered to his disciples; *Not to give that which is holy to dogs, nor to cast their pearls before swine,* (not to expose the holy and precious truth to very lewd and fierce people, who would snarl at it and trample upon it:) we may allow God, in his dispensation of his truth and grace to do what he bids the Apostles to do: before he enters into any house, or applies himself to any person, to examine whether the house or person be worthy, that is, will-

Matt. vii. 6.

Ἐξετάζετε. Matt. x. 11.

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ing to receive him, and apt to treat him well; if not, to decline them. Our Lord, we see, did leave even his own country, seeing men there were not disposed to use him with due honour and regard; seeing they were possessed with vain prejudices, apt to obstruct the efficacy of his divine instructions and miraculous performances; so that he was not likely (according to the ordinary way of divine providence) to produce any considerable effect towards their conversion. *He could not*, it is said, *do many miracles there, because of their unbelief;* he could not, that is, according to the most just and wise rules he did observe, he would not do them; because he perceived the doing them would not conduce to any good purpose; that they were not apt to look upon those works as the effects of divine power and goodness, performed for their benefit, (for inducing them to faith and repentance,) but rather that the doing them would expose God's mercy to contempt or reproach, at least to neglect or disregard. Hence our Saviour declined conversing with persons indisposed to (those ψυχικοὶ, who cannot δέχεσθαι τὰ τῦ πνεύματος) receive benefit by his instruction and example; to grow wiser or better by his conversation; as the Pharisees and Scribes; men prepossessed with corrupt opinions and vicious affections, obstructive to the belief of his doctrine and observance of his laws; and worldly persons; proud and self-conceited, crafty and deceitful, covetous, ambitious, and worldly men, incorrigibly tinctured with that φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς, *carnal wisdom and affection;* which *is enmity to God; so that it is not subject to the law of God, nor can be;* inextricably engaged in the friendship of the world, which is enmity to God: to such men the Gospel would certainly be a scandal or a folly: they would never be able to relish or digest the doctrine of purity, self-denial, patience, and the like doctrines opposite to carnal sense and conceit which it teacheth. From such wise and prudent men (conceited of their little wisdoms, and doting upon their own fancies) God did conceal those heavenly mysteries, which they would have despised and derided: those *many wise according to the*

Matt. xiii. 57, 58.

1 Cor. ii. 14.

Matt. xxi. 31.

Rom. viii. 7.
James iv. 4.
1 John ii. 15.

1 Cor. i. 23.

Mat. xi. 25.

1 Cor. i. 26.
James ii. 5.

flesh, many powerful, many noble, God did not choose to call into his church. Accordingly we may observe in the history of the Apostles, that God's Spirit did prohibit the Apostles passing through some places, it discerning how unsuccessful (at those seasons, in those circumstances, according to those dispositions of men) their preaching would be: *Passing through Phrygia and Galatia, being hindered by the Spirit to speak the word in Asia; coming to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.* Moreover there is plainly the like reason, why God should withhold his saving truth from some people, as why he should withdraw it from others; when it is abused or proves fruitless: but of such withdrawing we have many plain instances, attended with the declaration of the reasons of them; our Lord prophesied thus concerning the Jews; *I say unto you, that the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation doing the fruits thereof;* they, when our Saviour would have gathered them under his wings, wilfully refusing. Our Lord charged his disciples, when by any they were repulsed or neglected in their preaching, to leave those persons and places, *shaking off the dust from their feet,* in token of an utter (εἰς μαρτύριον ἐπ' αὐτὲς) detestation and desertion of them: and accordingly we see them practising in their Acts; when they perceived men perversely contradictious, or desperately senseless and stupid, so that they clamoured against the Gospel, and thrust it from them, they abstained from farther dealing with them, turning their endeavours otherwhere, toward persons of a more docile and ingenuous temper; thence more susceptive of faith and repentance: *To you,* say Paul and Barnabas to the contradicting and reproachful Jews, *it was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken; but seeing you put it from you, (or thrust it away from you,* ἀπωθεῖσθε αὐτὸν,) *and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, we turn to the Gentiles.* So when the Church of Ephesus was grown cold in charity, and deficient in good works, God threatens to remove her candlestick; or to withdraw from her that ligh of truth,

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Acts xvi. 6, 7.

Matt. xxi. 43.

Matt. x. 14. Luke ix. 5. Acts xiii. 51. xviii. 6.

Acts xiii. 46. xxviii. 26.

Rev. ii. 5.

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which shone with so little beneficial influence. It seems evident that God for the like reasons may withhold the discovery of his truth, or forbear to interpose his providence; so as to transmit light thither, where men's deeds are so evil, that they will love darkness rather than light; where their eyes are so dim and weak, that the light will but offend, and by the having it, hurt them; where they, by the having it declared to them, will only incur farther mischief and misery; it would prove to them but ὀσμὴ θανάτου, a *deadly scent*, as the most comfortable perfumes are offensive sometimes and noxious to distempered bodies. Wherefore as where the light doth shine most clearly, it is men's voluntary pravity, that by it many are not effectually brought to salvation; so it is men's voluntary depraving and corrupting themselves, (misusing their natural light, choaking the seeds of natural ingenuity, thwarting God's secret whispers and motions, complying with the suggestions of the wicked one,) so as to be rendered unmeet for the susception of God's heavenly truth and grace, which hinders God (who proceedeth ordinarily with men, in sweet and reasonable methods, not in way of impetuous violence and coaction) from dispensing them: we may say of such in the words of the Prophet, *They have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations. Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.* Τῇ ἑαυτοῦ ἀγαθότητι πᾶσιν ὁ Κύριος ἐγγίζει· μακρύνομεν δὲ ἑαυτοὺς ἡμεῖς διὰ τῆς ἁμαρτίας, *God doth by his goodness approach to all, but we set ourselves at distance by sin*, saith St. Basil; and ὅπου αὐτοπροαίρετος πονηρία ἐκεῖ καὶ ἀποχὴ τῆς χάριτος, *where there is self-chosen or affected wickedness, there is a withholding of grace*, saith another Father, (*apud* Cyrill. Hier.) The *Gospel, if it be hidden*, it is, as St. Paul says, *hidden* ἐν τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, *in viris perditis, among lost men*, (that is, men desperately gone in wickedness, incorrigible, unreclaimable people,) *in whom the God of this world* (that is, as St. Chrysostom expounds it, not the devil, but the good God himself) *hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, so that the light of the*

Καὶ γὰρ τὰς ὄψεις (φασὶ) τὸ μῦρον πνίγει. *Chrys.*

John iii. 19.

2 Cor. ii. 16.

Isa. lxvi. 3.

Jer. v. 25.

Bas. in Psal. xxxiii.

2 Cor. iv. 3.

Εἰς τὸ μὴ αὐγάσαι αὐτοῖς. *Chrys. in* 2 Cor. iv. 4.

glorious Gospel hath not shined to them, (πῶς ἓν ἐτύφλωσεν; *how then did God blind them?* saith St. Chrysostom,) οὐκ ἐνεργήσας εἰς τοῦτο, ἄπαγε· *not by any efficacy of his upon them toward that; fie on that;* ἀλλ' ἀφεὶς καὶ συγχωρήσας, *but by permission and concession;* for so the Scripture is wont to speak; Ἐπειδὰν γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἠπίστησαν πρῶτοι, καὶ ἀναξίους ἑαυτοὺς κατεσκεύασαν τῆ ἰδεῖν τὰ μυστήρια, καὶ αὐτὸς λοιπὸν εἴασεν· ἀλλὰ τί ἔδει ποιῆσαι; πρὸς βίαν ἕλκειν, καὶ ἐκπαλύπτειν μὴ βουλομένοις ἰδεῖν; ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἂν κατεφρόνησαν, καὶ οὐκ ἂν εἶδον. *Seeing,* saith he, *they disbelieved first, and constituted themselves unworthy to see the mysteries, even God at last let them alone; for what should he have done? Should he have drawn them violently, and discovered it to them being unwilling to see? They would then have more despised it, and not have seen it.* God is ever willing and ready to dispense his mercies and favours, but he is not wont to do it extraordinarily, (or beside the course of his ordinary provision,) but in a proper and fit season, (in that καιρὸς εὐπρόσδεκτος, *acceptable time and day of salvation,* when he seeth men capable of receiving them:) which season commonly dependeth upon man's will and choice, or the results of them. Καθόλου γὰρ ὁ Θεὸς οἶδεν τούς τε ἀξίους τῶν ἀγαθῶν καὶ μὴ· ὅθεν τὰ προσήκοντα ἑκάστοις δίδωσιν. Σωτὴρ γάρ ἐστιν· οὐχὶ τῶν μὲν, τῶν δ' οὔ· πρὸς ὃ τι δὲ ὅσον ἐπιτηδειότητος ἕκαστος εἶχεν, τὴν ἑαυτῆ διένειμεν εὐεργεσίαν· for (saith Clemens Alex. in his 7th of the Stromata, where he clearly and fully affirms our present doctrine) *Our Lord is not the Saviour of some and not of others: but, according as men are fitly disposed, he hath distributed his beneficence to all.* St. Augustine himself somewhere speaketh no less; or rather more: *Præcedit aliquid in peccatoribus,* saith he, *quo, quamvis nondum sint justificati, digni efficiantur justificatione: et idem præcedit in aliis peccatoribus quo digni sint obtusione.* But,

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Luke xix. 44. 2 Cor. vi. 2. Rom. xiii. 11.

Clem. Strom. vii. p. 105.

Quæst. 68. e Quæst. 83. Tom. iv. Part. i. Venit de occultissimis meritis, &c. *Ibid.*

3. If all these considerations do not thoroughly satisfy us concerning the reason of God's proceedings in this case, we may consider that God's providence is inscrutable and impenetrable to us; that, according to the Psalmist, *as God's mercy is in the heavens, and his faithfulness*

Psal. xxxvi. 6.

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reacheth to the clouds; so *his righteousness is like the great mountains*, (too high for our reason to climb,) *and his judgments*, πολλὴ ἄβυσσος, a great abyss, too deep for our feeble understanding to fathom; that his ways are more subtile and spiritual than to be traced by our dim and gross sight. So upon contemplation of a like case, although, as it seems, hardly so obscure or unaccountable as this, the case concerning God's conditional rejection of that people, whom he in a special manner had so much and so long favoured, St. Paul himself doth profess. That therefore although we cannot fully resolve the difficulty, we notwithstanding without distrust should adhere to those positive and plain declarations, whereby God representeth himself seriously designing and earnestly desiring, *That all men should come to the knowledge of the truth; that none should perish, but that all should come to repentance;* not doubting but his declared mind, and his secret providence, although we cannot thoroughly discern or explain their consistency, do yet really and fully conspire. But no farther at this time.

Rom. xi. 33.

2 Pet. iii. 9.

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THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION ASSERTED AND EXPLAINED.

1 Tim. iv. 10.

——*The living God; who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe.*

8. As our Saviour was such to all men by his doctrine, or the general discovery of all saving truth, so may he be esteemed such in regard to his exemplary practice; whereby upon the open stage of the world, and in the common view of all that would attend unto him, he did represent a living pattern of all goodness; by imitating which, we may certainly attain salvation. He that will consider his practice shall find it admirably fitted for general instruction and imitation; calculated for all places and all sorts of people; suited to the complexions, to the capacities, to the degrees, to the callings of all men; so that every sort of men may from it draw profitable direction, may in it find a copy, even of his particular behaviour: for he was a great Prince, illustrious in birth, excellent in glory, and abounding in all wealth; yet was born in obscurity, lived without pomp, and seemed to possess nothing; so teaching men of high rank to be sober, mild, and humble; not to rest in, not to regard much, not to hug and cling to the accommodations and shows of worldly state; teaching those of mean degree to be patient, content, and cheerful in their station. He was exceedingly wise and knowing, without bound

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or measure; yet made no ostentation of extraordinary knowledge, of sharp wit, of deep subtilty; did not vent high, dark, or intricate notions; had in his practice no reaches and windings of craft or policy; but was in his doctrine very plain and intelligible, in his practice very open and clear; so that what he commonly said or did, not only philosophers and statesmen, but almost the simplest idiots might easily comprehend; so that those might thence learn not to be conceited of their superfluous wisdom; these not to be discouraged in their harmless ignorance; both having thence an equally sufficient instruction in all true righteousness, a complete direction in the paths to happiness, being thereby σοφιζόμενοι εἰς σωτηρίαν, made wise and learned to salvation. He did not immerse himself in the cares, nor engage himself into the businesses of this world; yet did not withdraw himself from the company and conversation of men: he retired often from the crowd, that he might converse with God and heavenly things; he put himself into it, that he might impart good to men, and benefit the world, declining no sort of society; but indifferently conversing with all; disputing with the doctors, and eating with the publicans; whence thereby both men of contemplative and quiet dispositions or vocations, and men of busy spirits, or of active lives, may be guided respectively; those not to be morose, supercilious, rigid, contemptuous toward other men; these not to be so possessed or entangled with the world, as not to reserve some leisure for the culture of their minds, not to employ some care upon the duty of piety and devotion; both may learn, whether in private retirements, or in public conversation and employment, especially to regard the service of God and the benefit of men: thus was the example of our Lord accommodated for all men; especially conducting them in the hardest and roughest parts of the way leading to bliss, the acclivities and asperities of duty; self-denial, or neglect of worldly glory and fleshly pleasure, patience, humility, general charity; shewing us the possibility of performing such duties, and encouraging us thereto. Through these

2 Tim. iii. 15.

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difficult and dangerous passages (as a resolute chieftain of life) he undauntedly marched before us, charging, beating back, and breaking through all opposite forces, all enemies, all temptations, all obstacles; enduring painfully the most furious assaults of the world; boldly withstanding and happily conquering the most malicious rage of hell; so that victory and salvation we shall be certain of, if we pursue his steps, and do not basely (out of faintness or falsehood) desert so good a leader; we shall not fail of the unfading crown, if *with patience we run the race that is set before us, looking unto the Captain and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus, who, for the joy proposed unto him, endured the cross, despised the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* Would it not raise and inflame any courage to see his commander to adventure so boldly upon all hazards, to endure so willingly all hardships? Whom would not the sight of such a forerunner animate and quicken in his course; who, by running in the straight way of righteousness with alacrity and constancy, hath obtained himself a most glorious crown, and holdeth forth another like thereto, for the reward of those who follow him? Now as our Lord's doctrine, so did his example, in the nature and design thereof, respect and appertain to all men, it being also like the light of heaven, a common spectacle, a public guide, *to guide our steps in the way of peace:* if it do not appear so, if it do not effectually direct all, it is by accident and beside God's intention; it is by the fault of them who should propound it, or of them who have not eyes fit or worthy to behold it; briefly, what was said concerning the universal revelation of Christian doctrine may be applied to Christ's practice.

Ἀρχηγὸς ζωῆς. Acts iii. 15.

1 Pet. ii. 21.

Heb. xii. 2. 1 Pet. v. 4. Ἀμαραντινον τῆς δόξης στέφανον. — στέφανος ζωῆς. Rev. ii. 10. Jam. i. 12.

Πρόδρομος. Heb. vi. 20.

9. Jesus is *the Saviour of all men,* as having combated and vanquished all the enemies of man's welfare and happiness; dispossessing them of all their pretences and usurpations over man, disarming them of all their power and force against him; enabling us to withstand and overcome them. Man's salvation hath many adversaries of different nature and kind; some directly oppugning it, some for-

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mally prejudicing it, some accidentally hindering it; some alluring, some forcing, some discouraging from it, or from the means conducing to it: the chief of them we may from the Scripture (with consent of experience) reckon to be the *devil*, with all his envy and malice, his usurpations, his delusions, and his temptations to sin; the *world*, with its snares and baits, its violences, persecutions, and menaces; the *flesh*, or natural concupiscence, with its bad inclinations and propensities to evil, its lusts and pleasures; *sin*, with its guilt, and mischievous consequences; the *law*, with its rigorous exactions, hard measure, and harsh boding; *conscience*, with its accusations and complaints, its terrors and anguishes; *divine anger*, with its effects, *death* and *hell*. [a] All these our Lord hath in several and suitable ways defeated; as to their malignity, contrariety, or enmity in respect of man's salvation; he hath, as Zachariah prophesieth in his Benedictus, *saved us from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us: so that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might* (ἀφόβως) *safely and securely, without danger or fear, serve him, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.*

Luke i. 71, 74.

Matt. xiii. 28. Luke xi. 19. 1 Pet. v. 8. Dragon, Rev. xii. 3, &c. Acts x. 38. 1 John ii. 14. Rev. xii. 9. John xii. 31. xiv. 30. xvi. 11. Ephes. ii. 2. vi. 12. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Col. i. 13. Acts xxvi. 18. x. 38. 2 Tim. ii. 26. Heb. ii. 14. Luke x. 18. John xii. 31. xvi. 11.

The *devil*, (that *enemy*, that *adversary*, that *accuser*, that *slanderer*, that *murderer*, that *greedy lion*, that *crafty serpent*, the *strong one*, the *mischievous one*, the *destroyer*,) who usurped an authority, and exercised a domination over mankind, as *the prince of this world;* who made prize of them, *captivated them at his pleasure;* who detained them under the power (or authority) of darkness and wickedness; who had the power of death; him our Saviour hath destroyed or defeated, (καταργησεν, as the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh; that is, abolished him as to any farther pretence of empire or power over us;) him he hath dejected from heaven, *(I saw Satan like lightning falling down from heaven;)* him *he hath cast out: Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the*

[a] —ὁ Χριστὸς θεὸν τῆς ἰδίας ποιήσεως προσκατέλιπε τῷ ἔρχοντι τῷ κόσμου τούτου. *Athan. contra Apoll.* p. 628.

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prince of this world be cast out: all *his works he hath dissolved: For this cause*, saith St. John, *the Son of God did appear, that he might dissolve the works of the devil.* He combated *this strong one*, (this mighty and dreadful foe of ours,) and baffled him, and bound him, and disarmed him, (taking away παυοπλίαν αὐτῦ, *the whole armour* in which he trusted,) and *spoiled him*, (τὰ σκεύη διήρπασε, *rifled all his baggage*, bare away all his instruments of mischief,) and plundered all his house; leaving him unable (without our fault, our baseness, our negligence) to do us mischief, (as is intimated in the 12th of St. Matthew, and 11th of St. Luke;) yea, *he triumphed over* all those infernal principalities and powers, and exposed them, as St. Paul saith: he imparted to his disciples ability to *trample upon all his power*, by him all his followers are so fortified as *to conquer the wicked one*, as St. John says: he affordeth light to discover *all his wiles and snares*, strength and courage *to withstand all his assaults, to repel all his fiery darts, to put him to flight.*

1 John iii. 8. Matt. xii. 29. Luke xi. 21, 22. Coloss. ii. 15. ἐδειγμάτισεν, Luke x. 19. 1 Joh. ii. 14. Eph. vi. 11. 2 Cor. ii. 11. Eph. vi. 16. 1 Pet. v. 9. Eph. iv. 27. Jam. iv. 7.

The *world* also (that is, the wicked principles, the bad customs, the naughty conversation and example which commonly prevail here among men; alluring to evil and deterring from good; the cares also, the riches, the pleasures, the glories of the world, which possess or distract the minds, satiate and cloy the desires, employ all the affections and endeavours, take up the time of men; all in the world which fasteneth our hearts to earth, and to these low transitory things; or which sink them down toward hell; and which detain them from soaring toward heaven) is an enemy, an irreconcileable enemy to our salvation; the friendship thereof being inconsistent with a friendship in us toward the God of our salvation; or in him toward us: for *the friendship of the world is enmity with God;* and, *If any man love the world, the friendship of the Father is not in him.* And this enemy our Lord hath vanquished, and enabled us to overcome. *Be of courage*, saith he, *I have overcome the world: he*, by a constant self-denial and temperance, defeated the bewitching pleasures and flattering glories of it; *he*, by an immove-

Jam. iv. 4. 1 John ii. 15. John xvi. 33.

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able patience, baffled the terrible frowns and outrageous violences of it; *he*, by a resolute and invincible maintenance of truth, in great measure routed and dissipated the errors and oppositions thereof; *he*, by a general and intense charity, surmounted the provocations, envies, and enmities thereof; *he* did it himself for us, and *he* also enabled us to do it; furnishing us with sufficient strength, and fit weapons, whereby we may combat and conquer it; may sustain and repel its force; may shun and elude its baits; for, *every one that* (by faith in him) *is born of God, doth overcome the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith: Who is he that overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?* In all these things (that is, in whatever concerns the world and its enmity; *tribulation*, or *distress*, or *persecution*, or *famine*, or *nakedness*, or *peril*, or *sword*) *we are*, saith St. Paul, *more than conquerors through him that loves us; thanks be to God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ:* our Lord hath procured for us hopes that will raise our minds and affections above the world; objects employing our care and endeavour far beyond it; satisfactions that will cheer our hearts, and satiate our desires without it; comforts that will support and sustain our spirits against all the terrors, all the assaults, all the evils thereof; by his means it is, that we have no reason either to love it, or to fear it or to value it, or to be concerned about it; but to contemn it as a thing unworthy of us and below us.

1 John v. 4, 5.

Rom. viii. 38. 2 Cor. ii. 14. Phil. i. 28.

Gal. v. 24.

The *flesh* also (that is, all that within us of bodily temper, or natural constitution, which inclineth and swayeth us to vicious excess in sensual enjoyments; which disposeth us to the inordinate love of ourselves, and of other creatures; which *lusts against the spirit*, and is adversary thereto; which blindeth and darkeneth our minds in the apprehension of our judgment concerning divine things; which perverteth and disableth (enfeebleth) our wills in the choice and prosecution of what is good; which discomposeth and disordereth the affections and passions of our soul; which continually enticeth and se-

1 Cor. ii. 14. Matt. xxvi. 41. Gal. v. 17. Rom. vii. 18, 19. Jam. i. 14.

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duceth us to sin) is also an enemy; a very powerful, very treacherous, very dangerous, and very mischievous enemy to us and our welfare; rendering us enemies to God, (for *the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be,)* being *another law in our members, warring against the law of our mind, and captivating us to the law of sin;* engendering and fostering those *fleshly lusts which war against the soul;* whose works and fruits are all sorts of intemperance, impurity, pride, envy, contentiousness: this capital enemy of ours our Lord did in his own person first subdue, rejecting all the suggestions and thwarting the impulses thereof; entirely submitting to and performing the will of God; even in willingly drinking that cup, which was so distasteful, so grievous to natural will and fleshly desire. He so conquered the flesh in himself for us; he also conquers it in us, by the guidance and assistance of his grace enabling us to withstand it, and to overcome it. *The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus*, saith St. Paul, *hath freed me from the law of sin and death.* He infuses a light discussing those fogs which stream from carnal sense and appetite; so that we may clearly discern divine truths, the will of God, the way to happiness: he inserteth principles of spiritual life and strength, counterpoising and overswaying corporeal and sensual propensions; so that we can restrain sensual desires, and compose irregular passions, and submit readily to God's will, and observe cheerfully God's law, and freely comply with the dictates of the Spirit, or of right reason; he so continually aideth, encourageth, and upholds us, that we *can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth* us; so that by his power and help *the flesh with its affections and lusts are crucified;* the *earthly members are mortified; the old man (which was corrupted according to deceitful lusts) is put off; the body of sin is so destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin; sin doth not reign in our mortal bodies, so that we* (must) *obey it in the lusts thereof; we are renewed in the spirit of our minds;* and *do put on the new man, which is created according to God in righteousness and true holiness.*

Rom. viii. 7. Rom. vii. 23. 1 Pet. ii. 11. Gal. v. 19. 1 Cor. iii. 3. Col. iii. 5. Luke xxii. 42. Matt. xxvi. 39. John xvii. 19. Heb. ii. 10. Rom. viii. 2. 2 Cor. iv. 6. 1 Cor. ii. 15. 1 John ii. 27. Eph. v. 8. Rom. xii. 2. 1 John v. 3. Phil. ii. 13. Phil. iv. 13. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Heb. xiii. 21. Gal. v. 24. Coloss. iii. 5. ii. 11. Eph. iv. 22. Rom. vi. 6. 12. vii. 13. Heb. xii. 1. Eph. iv. 23. ii. 10. Coloss. iii. 10.

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Our *sins* also are very grievous enemies of ours, loading us with heavy guilt, stinging us with bitter remorse and anxious fear, keeping us under miserable bondage, exposing us to extreme mischief and misery; them our Lord hath also routed and vanquished: in regard to this performance was the name Jesus assigned to him; as the angel told Joseph: *She shall bear a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins:* [*From their sins;* taking in all the causes and the consequences of them; [b] from all those spiritual enemies, which draw us, or drive us into them; from the guilt and obnoxiousness to punishment, the terror and anguish of conscience, the wrath and displeasure of God following upon them, the slavery under their dominion, the final condemnation and sufferance of grievous pains for them;] the guilt of sin he particularly freed us from: for *he loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.* Christ died for sinners, (for us then being sinners,) that is, that he might deliver us from our sins, with all their causes, adjuncts, and consequences. *He bare our sins in his own body on the tree: the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin; he is the propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world; he was manifested to take away our sins; once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin* (εἰς ἀθέτησιν ἁμαρτίας, *to the abolition of sin*) *by the sacrifice of himself;* we are *justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; by his obedience many are constituted righteous,* (or free from the guilt and imputation of sin;) *he justifies the ungodly; covering their sins,* and *not imputing them unto them.* So doth he wipe away the guilt of sin; and he voids the condemnation passed for them; for *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus: who is there that can condemn, since Christ hath died, or rather hath risen again?*

Heb. xii. 4. Πρὸς τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἀντεγωνιζόμενοι.

Matt. i. 21. 1 Tim. i. 15.

Rev. i. 5. 1 Pet. i. 19.

1 Pet. ii. 24. iii. 18. 1 John i. 7. ii. 2. iii. 5. iv. 10. Heb. i. 3. ix. 26, 28.

Rom. iii. 24. v. 19.

Rom. iv. 5, 6, 7.

Rom. viii. 1, 34.

He hath also appeased God's wrath for sin, and removed the effects of it, (the punishment and vengeance due to sin

[b] Ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τῷ Θεῷ ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν τῷ γένει τῶν ἀνθρώπων διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου πάθους πληρεστάτην ἀπέδωκε τὴν σωτηρίαν, ἵνα ὅλον τὸν ἄνθρωπον ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἐνεχόμενον πάσης ἁμαρτίας ἐλευθερώσῃ. *Damasus Epist. apud Theod.* v. 9.

and threatened for it:) so that *being enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:* Jesus is the ὁ ῥυόμενος, *who delivers us from the wrath to come; being justified by his blood, we shall be saved by him from wrath.* Rom. v. 10, 1. 1 Thess. i. 10. Rom. v. 9.

The strength and dominion of sin he hath also broken, by the grace afforded us, whereby we are able to resist and avoid it: so that *sin henceforth shall not domineer over us, or reign in our mortal body: Being freed from sin, we are enslaved to righteousness, and made servants to God. The body of sin is destroyed, so that we no longer serve sin.*— Whence consequently he hath subdued, utterly weakened, or quite destroyed (as to any force or mischievous influence upon us) those other adversaries, which depend upon sin, and by its power oppose and afflict us. Rom. vi. 14, 12, 18, 22, 6.

Our *conscience* is such an enemy accusing us, condemning us, vexing us with the memory and sense of sin; suggesting to us the depth of our guilt, and the danger of our state, terrifying us with the expectation of punishment and vengeance: but our Lord (by securing us of mercy and favour upon repentance and sincere obedience) hath silenced and stilled this adversary; hath *by his blood*, as the Apostle to the Hebrews says, *purged our conscience from dead works; hath delivered them, who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage;* so that thence we obtain a steady peace of mind, a joyful satisfaction in the service of God, a comfortable hope of future bliss: *peace, comfort*, and *joy* are the adjuncts of that state he shall put us into, and the fruits of that Spirit he bestoweth on us. Heb. ix. 14. Heb. ii. 15. Rom. xv. 13. xiv. 17. Gal. v. 22.

The *Law* also (in its rigour, as requiring exact obedience, and as denouncing vengeance to them who in any point violate it) is, by reason of our weakness and inability so perfectly to observe it, an enemy to us; justifying no man, perfecting no man, causing, increasing, aggravating, *quickening, declaring* sin; *yielding occasion to sin of killing us, working wrath, ministering death and condemnation, subjecting us to a curse*, as St. Paul teacheth us: but our Gal. ii. 16. iii. 11. Heb. vii. 19. Rom. x. 5. viii. 3. Gal. iii. 12. v. 3. Rom. vii. 13. iv. 15. iii. 20. v. 20. vii. 7, 8, 10, 11. 1 Cor. xv. 5.

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Lord, by mitigating and abating the extreme rigour thereof, by procuring an acceptance of sincere (though not accurate) obedience, by purchasing and dispensing pardon for transgression thereof upon repentance, by conferring competent strength and ability to perform it in an acceptable degree, hath brought under this adversary; hath *redeemed us from the curse of the law*; hath *justified and imputed righteousness to us without the works of the law*, (without such punctual performances as the law exacts:) we are *delivered from the law*, (as to those effects of it; the condemning, discouraging, enslaving us,) we cease to be under the law, (in those respects,) being under grace, being led by the Spirit, as St. Paul tells us. The law indeed is still our rule, our guide, our governor; we are obliged to follow and obey it; but it ceases to be a tyrant over us, a tormentor of us.

2 Cor. iii. 7, 9.

Gal. iii. 13. Rom. iii. 21, 28, iv. 6. vii. 6, 4. vi. 14. Gal. v. 18.

Death is also an enemy, (*The last enemy*, saith St. Paul, *which shall be destroyed, is death,*) the enemy, which naturally we most fear and abominate; that which would utterly destroy us.

1 Cor. xv. 26.

This enemy our Lord hath vanquished and destroyed: by his death and resurrection he opened the way to a happy immortality; *he abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel: He* by his *death defeated him that had the power of death; and delivered them, who by fear of death were through their whole life subject to bondage*; he pulled out sin, which is the sting of death, and reversed the sentence of condemnation, to which we all stood obnoxious. *The wages of sin* (that which we had deserved, and was by law due to us for it) *was death; but the gift of God is everlasting life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Acts ii 24. 1 Cor. xv. 20. Acts xxvi. 23. Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 5. Acts iii 15. Ἀρχηγὸς ζωῆς. 2 Tim. i. 10. Heb. ii. 14. Rom. vi. 23.

Lastly, *Hell*, (that is, *utter darkness*, extreme discomfort, intolerable and endless misery,) the most dismal of all enemies, our Lord hath, by the virtue of his merits, and the power of his grace, put us into a capacity of avoiding; *He hath*, as St. Paul before told us, *delivered us from the wrath to come. O Hell, where is thy victory? Death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire.*

1 Thess. i. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 55. Rev. xx. 14.

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Thus hath our Lord in our behalf vanquished and defeated every thing that is opposed or prejudicial to our salvation and welfare. Many indeed of these things do in a more immediate, more peculiar, and more signal manner concern the faithful members of the Christian Church, and are directly applied to them; yet all of them in some sort, according to God's design, and in respect to a remote capacity, may be referred to *all men*. They are benefits which God intended for *all men*, and which *all men* (if they be not faulty and wanting to themselves) may obtain. How they more especially appertain to the faithful, we may shew afterward.

APPLICATION.

1. Hence ariseth great matter and cause of glorifying God; both from the thing itself and its extent; for the magnitude of beneficence is to be estimated, not only according to the degree of quality, but according to its amplitude of object: to redeem any doth signify goodness, to redeem many doth increase it, to redeem all doth advance it to the highest pitch; the more are obliged, the greater is the glory due to the benefactor.

Hence *the earth being full of the goodness of the Lord, the Lord being gracious unto all, and his mercy being over all his works*, all creatures partaking of God's bounty, is so often insisted upon in those divine hymns, as a ground of praise to God.

Some do indeed speak of glorifying God for his discriminating grace, as if grace the narrower it were the better it were: but is not selfishness and envy at the bottom of this? Is not this the disposition of those in the Gospel, who *murmured——is thine eye evil because mine is good?*

It is dangerous to restrain God's benevolence and beneficence within bounds narrower than they really are; thereby diminishing his glory.

2. Hereby is discovered the general obligation of men to love God; to praise him, to serve him in sense of his goodness, in regard to his beneficence, out of gratitude

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toward him. If God hath been so kindly affected toward men, and so careful of their welfare, as for procuring and promoting their salvation to provide a Saviour for them, to design his own beloved Son to that performance, in prosecution thereof depressing him into so low a state, exposing him to such inconveniences and indignities, such crosses and afflictions, how much are then all men obliged to love him, as their gracious friend and benefactor; to praise and celebrate him for his favour and mercy, to render all blessings and thanks unto him? This certainly is the duty of all, if the redemption in God's design reach to all; otherwise in reality it lieth on few, in practice it could scarce touch any. They cannot be obliged to thank God for their redemption, who are not obliged to him for the thing itself; they cannot heartily resent the kindness, who are not assured that it extends to them: and to such assurance (according to the doctrine of particular redemption) it is certain that very few men, especially of the best men, can arrive; it is a question whether any men arrive thereto.

Rev. v. 9. Eph. i. 6. Col. i. 12.

According to the sense of all men, it is also no easy thing to know certainly, whether a man at present be in the state of grace: and he that doth not know that, cannot (except upon the score of general redemption) be assured that he is redeemed; and therefore cannot thank God.

It hath been the common doctrine of Christendom for fifteen hundred years together, that no man (without a special revelation) can in this life be assured of his perseverance, and consequently not of his salvation; and consequently not of his election or redemption, in case only they who are saved are in the design of God redeemed: no man therefore, without that special revelation, can thank God heartily for his redemption, as being uncertain thereof, it being a secret reserved in God's breast.

It is yet a farther difficulty, supposing a man to have a good assurance of his present state, to be assured of his final perseverance in it: which he that hath not, cannot (except upon the said score) thank God for it.

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The best men especially, who, out of modesty and humility, are apt to doubt of their present state; who studying their hearts, and discovering many imperfections in themselves; who reflecting on their lives, and observing in them many defects, are apt to question whether they are qualified for God's favour, or fitted for the future account and enjoyment of heaven; who considering the treachery of their hearts, the feebleness of their reason, that unsteadiness of their resolution, will be apt to fear they may fall away, will be rendered hence uncapable to give God thanks for their redemption: only the bold and blind bayards (who usually out of self-conceit are so exceedingly confident of their election and salvation) will be able to praise God for it.

Hence the assurance of salvation happening to few, and of them to much fewer upon good grounds; it being necessary to none, it being perhaps (yet far more probably, according to the general sense of Christendom) groundless to any; few or none are capable to render God praise and thanks for it: so shall he lose in effect all thanks for the greatest benefit he did ever confer on mankind.

It is therefore a dangerous opinion, which checketh their gratitude, which stoppeth their mouths from praising God, which so depriveth God of his due praise. It is much more safe to praise God for the benefits we conceive we have, but have not, than to neglect to praise him for that we have.

3. This doctrine doth afford great matter of comfort. If a man reflecting on his own heart and ways (observing in them many blemishes and defects) is apt to be discouraged, yet it will raise him to consider, that he is not thereby excluded from a possibility of salvation, seeing he is assured of God's favourable inclination, and who hath expressed so much good-will and favour toward him in his redemption; seeing he is persuaded, that he hath a Saviour so kindly and pitifully affected toward him; who wisheth him well; who is concerned in his salvation, that he might not be crossed or defeated in his designs, that he might not lose the effects of his endeavours, the price of

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his blood. But he that seeth himself in so doubtful a condition, as to his own qualifications, and withal hath no assurance that God was ever graciously disposed toward him, cannot but thereby be much discouraged.

This doctrine therefore is safe and useful; it can do no man harm; it may do him great good, by giving him hopes of being assisted and accepted by his Redeemer. But the other is dangerous, as tending to discourage and deject men.

4. This doctrine is a great incitement to the performance of duty; both as working upon men's ingenuity, and disposing them in gratitude to serve God, from the resentment of their obligation for so great a favour; and as assuring them of acceptance in case of endeavour to obey. How can he but be moved willingly to serve God, who hath an apprehension of God's such merciful design to save him? of his having done so much in order thereto?

But how can he be moved to serve God in consideration of such a benefit, who is ignorant of its being intended him? How can any man apply himself cheerfully to serve that master, whose favourable inclination toward him, whose readiness to accept his service, he doubteth of?

1 Cor. vi. 20. 1 Pet. i. 17.

The Apostles propound it as a ground of gratitude, and an obligation to the performance of duty, that they are redeemed by Christ; which supposeth they do all know and believe it.

Supposing Christ is not the Redeemer of all, but of those only who shall be finally saved, these grounds of thankfulness and enforcements of duty cannot properly or pertinently respect all Christians, and indeed only those who are sure of their salvation.

My thanking Christ for his redeeming me, my diligently serving him as my Redeemer, supposeth my opinion, and is grounded upon the truth of his being really so:—I cannot heartily, confidently, or comfortably do it, except I know it, and am assured thereof; which I cannot do, except Christ died for all men, or that I am assured of my particular election.

So that either Christ is an universal Saviour, or the

greatest part of Christians are disobliged and incapacitated reasonably to thank him, to praise him, to serve him, as they are enjoined to do. SERM. LXXIV.

5. It is a great aggravation of infidelity, of apostasy, of all disobedience, that we are guilty of them, do frustrate the designs and undertakings of Christ, do reject the overtures of his grace, do abuse the goodness and mercy of their Redeemer; it consequently deterreth from those things.

The Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the counsel of God toward them; (God therefore designed their good.) Luke vii. 30.

How shall we escape that neglect so great salvation? A salvation which they were capable of, which was designed for them, which was offered to them; otherwise there would have been no danger in neglecting it, no fault in doing it. Heb. ii. 3.

It is said of the Jews at Antioch in Pisidia, that *they did ἀπωθεῖσθαι, thrust away the Gospel, (the word of salvation,* that was sent them,) *judging themselves unworthy of eternal life:* God did think fit out of goodness seriously to offer it to them, but they did not think fit to embrace it. Acts xiii. 26, 46.

Despisest thou the riches of God's goodness? How can any man despise that which doth not concern him, which never was offered him, which at least he hath no ground of confidence, that it extendeth to him? 2 Pet. iii. 9. Rom. ii. 4.

These things I speak that ye may be saved: so our Lord saith to those——*who did not believe in him.* John v. 34, 38.

How often have I willed, &c. Matt. xxiii. 47.

Denying the Lord that bought them. 2 Pet. ii. 1.

6. It is a great encouragement and excitement to devotion. Who can be backward of having recourse to his Redeemer; or of using his mediation? Whom will not such an experiment of goodness invite and encourage?

But the contrary apprehension must needs damp devotion, and discourage from it. He can apply himself to God but faintly and distrustfully, who distrusteth whether he hath any Redeemer or Mediator, or no; who must thus conceive and say to himself: Perhaps God hath loved me, and perhaps he never had nor will have any regard to my

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welfare. Perhaps Christ died with intention to do me good; perhaps he never did mean any such thing. Perhaps those expressions of kindness sounding so generally do not include me; perhaps I am excluded, and only deluded by them. When a man cannot say to Christ, O my Saviour!—O my Mediator! &c. nor use his intercession with God for the procurement of faith, of grace, of any good thing.

7. It is a ground and motive of charity; there arising thence a more considerable relation between all men; being all the objects of Christ's love and mercy should endear men to one another; it rendereth every man valuable in our eyes, as dear and precious in God's sight. It should make his salvation desirable to us.

Pray for all men, saith St. Paul.

The contrary opinion removeth this ground of charity; and so cooleth it.

8. It should consequently render us careful to promote the salvation of others, and fearful to hinder it by ill example, by ill doctrine, by any misbehaviour. So doth St. Paul argue, when he saith, *Destroyest thou him for whom Christ died?*

9. It is a piece of justice to acknowledge the right and interest of every man in his Saviour.

A wrong to exclude any; to confine and appropriate this great blessing; to engross, to inclose a common; to restrain that by forging distinctions, which is so unlimitedly expressed.

The undertakings and performances of our Saviour did respect all men, as the common works of nature do; as the air we breathe in, as the sun which shineth on us; the which are not given to any man particularly, but to all generally; not as a proper inclosure, but as a common—they are indeed mine, but not otherwise than as they do belong to all men.

A gift they are to all equally, though they do not prove to all a blessing; there being no common gift, which by the refusal, neglect, or ill use of it may not prove a curse—*a savour of death.*

SERMON LXXV.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD, TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY.

LUKE ii. 10.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people [a].

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THE proper business of a festival is spiritual joy, conceived in our hearts by reflection on some notable blessing conferred on us; accompanied with a grateful sense and expression, answerable to the special bounty and mercy of God, in due proportion to the nature and degree of that blessing.

Such joy is a duty, or a part of religious devotion, required by God, and very acceptable to him: for as God would have his servants perpetually content, well satisfied, and cheerful in all states, and upon all occurrences; so he doth especially demand from us, that we should entertain his favours with delight and complacence; it being proper, it being seemly, it being just, so to do: for since joy is a natural result of our obtaining whatever we do apprehend good, or esteem and affect; the conception of it is a plain argument, that we do well understand, do rightly prize, do cordially like, do thankfully embrace God's favours; as, on the contrary, a defect of it doth imply, that

1 Thess. v. 16. Rom. xii. 12. Phil. iv. 4.

[a] Ἰδοὺ γὰρ εὐαγγελίζομαι ὑμῖν χαρὰν μεγάλην, ἥτις ἔσται παντὶ τῷ λαῷ.

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we do not mind them, or take them to be little worth, that we do not sensibly relish them, or accept them kindly. And if ever we are obliged, if ever we are concerned so to rejoice, then surely it is now; when the fairest occasion and highest cause of joy that ever was is presented to us; when certain news from heaven, and the best that ever came from thence, of the most admirable, the most glorious, the most beneficial event, that ever happened in the world, is in a manner suitably rare conveyed to us; for, *Behold*, saith the angel, *I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.*

Upon which words (each whereof is emphatical, and pregnant with matter observable) we shall first make a brief descant, or paraphrase, supplying the room of a curious analysis; then we shall urge the main duty couched in them.

Ἰδὲ, *Behold:* This is a word denoting *admiration*, exciting *attention*, intimating *assurance: Behold*, and *admire;* it is no mean, no ordinary matter, that I report, but a most remarkable, a very marvellous event: *Behold*, and *attend;* it is a business not to be passed over with small regard, but most worthy your consideration, of high moment and concernment to you. *Behold* and *see;* it is no uncertain, no obscure thing; but whereof you may be fully assured, as if it were most evident to your sense, and which by conspicuous proofs shall be demonstrated; in the mean while you have no slight authority for it: for

Εὐαγγελίζομαι, *I bring good tidings; I*, an angel, a special messenger God purposely sent on this errand, that by the strangeness of my apparition I may excite you to regard it, by the weight of my testimony I may incline you to believe it, by the dignity of my nature I may declare the importance of it; *I*, a faithful servant of God, and a kind friend to men, very willing at his command to perform good offices to them, do bring a message well becoming an angel's mouth, worth my descent from heaven, and putting on this visible shape: for *I bring*

Εὐαγγελίζομαι χαρὰν μεγάλην, *good tidings of great joy:* I bring *tidings* that may gratify the curiosity of any man,

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the mind of man naturally being greedy of news: *good tidings;* those are welcome to all men, and apt to yield more pleasure than any knowledge we had before: tidings *of joy;* such as may not only minister a dry satisfaction to your reason, but sensibly touch your affections, by the comfortable nature and beneficial tendency of them: tidings of *great joy;* as not touching any indifferent or petty business, but affairs of nearest concernment and highest consequence to you: (such, indeed, as you shall understand, which do concern not the poor interests of this world, not the sorry pleasures of sense, not any slender advantage of your present life and temporal state; but your spiritual welfare, your everlasting condition, the future joy and happiness of your souls;) *tidings*, indeed, the most gladsome that ever sounded upon earth, that ever entered into mortal ear: these *I bring*

Ὑμῖν, *to you:* to you *shepherds;* persons of mean condition and simple capacity, leading this innocent and humble sort of life, employed in your honest vocation, undergoing toilsome labour and sore hardship; witness the open field, witness the cold season, witness the dark night, in which I find you watching and guarding your sheep; to you, who could expect no very welcome tidings; who are little concerned in any great transactions, and can have small ambition or hope of bettering your condition by any changes here; even to you (not in the first place to the mighty *princes*, to the crafty *statesmen*, to the sage *philosophers*, or learned *rabbies*, to the wealthy *merchants*, or fine *citizens*, who now are warm in their houses, enjoying their ease and pleasure; reposing on their beds, or sitting by their fires, or revelling at their banquets and sports; but to you,) poor, harmless, silly, industrious souls, who well may represent the greater and better part of mankind; in this surprising and absolutely free way the gracious Lord of heaven by me his special minister doth vouchsafe to send from thence *tidings of great joy:* which shall be

Luke ii. 8.

Pauperibus atque vigilantibus, &c. *Bern. de Nat. Serm.* 5.

Παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, *to all people;* or rather to all *the people;* that is, to God's ancient and peculiar people, in regard to which it is said, *I was not sent but to the lost sheep of the*

Matt. xv. 24. x. 6. Rom. ix. 4. Luke xxiv. 47. Acts xiii. 46. Isa. ii. 3. Zech. ix. 9. Rom. ix. 4.

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house of Israel; to *that* people, I say, especially, primarily, and more immediately this joy did appertain; it, by a closer relation to God, and special interest in his promises, having plainest title thereto; it, from anticipations of knowledge, faith, and hope, being more capable to admit such an overture; it indeed being the representative of all the spiritual Israel, or faithful seed of Abraham, for whom the benefits which these tidings import were designed; to it first indeed, but mediately and consequentially to all people dispersed on the face of the earth. The expression seemeth adapted to the present conceits of that nation, which apprehended nothing about God's favourable intentions to the community of men; but in effect it is to be understood extensively in reference to all people: for the Saviour, the Christ, the Lord, of whom this good news did report, was not only to be the Redeemer and Governor of that small people, but of the world, of every nation, of all mankind: here, indeed, we

Luke ii. 31. have παντὶ τῷ λαῷ, *to all the people;* but in the *nunc dimittis* of old Simeon, we have πάντων τῶν λαῶν, *of all the peoples:*

Luke ii. 30. *Mine eyes*, said he, *have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all the peoples:* As he

Luke ii. 32. was *the glory of his people Israel;* as in him *God did visit*

i. 68. Acts xiii. 47. *and redeem that his people;* so he *was made a light to*

Isa. xlix. 6. xlii. 6. *lighten the Gentiles, and to be for salvation to the uttermost*

Luke ii. 38. *ends of the earth:* he was *the expectation of Israel;* but

Hag. ii. 7. Psal. ii. 8. he was likewise *the desire of all nations:* he was destined *to*

Mic. v. 2. *rule in Sion;* but *the Heathen* also *were given for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his*

Isa. xi. 10. *possession:* he was *the root of Jesse, which should stand for an ensign of the people, to which the Gentiles should seek;* he was that royal Person, of whom the Psalmist did sing,

Psal. lxxii. 17. *Men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.*

He was to be born by nation a Jew, but a man by nature; *the Son of man* was a style which he commonly did own and affect, no less than the *Son of Abraham*, or of *David;* he was *born* indeed *under the law*, but *of a woman;*

Gal. iv. 4. Heb. ii. 14. and, therefore, brother to us all, as *partaker of the same*

flesh and blood: hence was he endued with an human compassion, and with a fraternal affection toward all men; hence was he disposed to extend the benefit of his charitable and gracious performances unto them all. SERM. LXXV.

Judea therefore must not ingross this angelical Gospel; it is of importance most universal and unlimited, reaching through all successions of time, and all extensions of place; filling all ages and all regions of the world with matter and with obligation of joy; hence even by Moses anciently (according to St. Paul's interpretation) were all nations upon this account invited to a common joy; *Rejoice*, said he, *O ye nations with his people.* Hence, in foresight of this event, the holy Psalmist (as the Fathers expound him[c]) did sing, *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of isles be glad thereof:* hence, *Sing, O thou barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child—The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose—Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth*, said the evangelical Prophet in regard to this dispensation; in fine, this angel himself did interpret his own words, when in concert with the heavenly choir he sang that anthem, *Glory be to God in the highest: on earth peace, and good-will toward men:* whence we may collect that a peace diffused over the earth, and good-will extended toward all men, were implied in these *tidings of great joy to all people.*

Rom. xv. 10. Deut. xxxii. 43. Psal. xcvii. 1. xcvi. 1. Isa. liv. 1. Isa. xxxv. 1. Isa. xlii. 10. Luke ii. 14.

We then are all concerned in these *tidings*, and we may look on them as by this heavenly Evangelist imparted to us; whence our duty must be to listen with reverent attention unto them, seriously to weigh the purport of them, diligently to contemplate the reasons of that great joy, which effectually should be produced in us by them, as their proper and due result; to further which practice, let us take some prospect of this Gospel, whereby it may ap-

[c] Τὴν προτέραν τῆ σωτῆρος ἐπιφάνειαν προλέγει. *Theodor.*

Totum ad Christum revocemus, si volumus iter rectae intelligentiæ tenere. *Aug. in Ps.* xcvi. 7.

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pear pleasant, and apt to kindle a sprightly joy in our hearts. The matter of it is the nativity of our ever blessed Lord and Saviour Christ Jesus; for, *To you*, saith our angel, *is born this day a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord;* an occurrence fraught with all the greatest causes of joy imaginable; as importing innumerable, unexpressibly and unconceivably vast advantages thence springing to us.

It doth minister occasion of rejoicing for all the blessings, which did flow from each of his salutary undertakings and performances; for all the mercies purchased by the merits of his obedience, and by the price of his blood; for all the graces issuing from his dispensation of the Holy Spirit; for all the benefits consequent on his illustrious resurrection, ascension, and glorification; as being a good entrance to them, yea, a great progress in them, and a certain pledge of their full accomplishment; for all the work of our redemption was in a manner achieved, when our Saviour did appear; his incarnation was the great step toward it, as being an act of the humblest obedience, and of the highest merit, that could anywise be performed, for satisfying the justice of God, and winning his favour toward us. His *taking up life* may well seem more meritorious than his *laying it down*, and the chief passion which he could ever undergo; his death was a passion, great as death could be; his life also was a continual passion, or exercise of huge patience: but his birth seemeth to be the greatest and strangest passion of all; involving the lowest submission and the deepest suffering. What nobler sacrifice could there be, than God's offering himself up to mortality, to infirmity, to slavery? What obedience can be thought of comparable to that which he did express, when he said, *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God: I came down, not that I might do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.* For him to descend from heaven, the region of light and bliss, into this gloomy and sad world; for him in a manner to divest himself of celestial majesty, and to assume the form of a servant; for him to be inclosed in a womb, and to come out wailing thence, to suck at a breast for life, to be carried in arms,

Heb. x. 7. John vi. 38.

and laid in a manger, to enter on a stage of being so very low and homely; for him, I say, *the Lord of glory*, thus *to empty* and *abase* himself[d]; may not this reasonably be deemed more than, after his becoming man, to sustain all the grievances incident to our nature and state? Whence *the very assumption of flesh was*, saith St. Athanasius, *the redemption of all mankind*[e]. He was at least thence engaged in the way of acting and suffering whatever was needful for our recovery; and having gone so far, assuredly he never would flinch or recoil, but would go through with all; being come, he would shew himself come to purpose, leaving no part unfinished of his grand design. SERM. LXXV. Phil. ii. 7. 8.

So that as they, who celebrate the birth of a prince, do mean thereby to express their joy for all the good, which they do hopefully presume to enjoy from his protection and conduct afterward in all his life; and as they, who welcome the sun-rising, do imply their satisfaction in the conveniences of his light through the whole ensuing day; so may the nativity of our Lord afford matter of rejoicing for all the train of mighty blessings which do succeed it. We may therefore now well consider him born to instruct us by his excellent doctrine, and to guide us by his perfect example; born to merit God's mercy and favour toward us, by an entire submission to God's pleasure in the whole conduct of his life, and in the final resignation of it; born to renew and sanctify our nature, to support and strengthen us in obedience to God's commandments, to succour us in temptations, to comfort us in distresses by his grace; born to rear himself from the grave for confirming our faith, and ensuring our hopes of salvation; born to ascend up above all the heavens to God's right hand, there effectually to intercede for us, thence liber-

[d] Ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν, ἑαυτὸν ἐταπείνωσεν.

[e] Ἡ πρόσληψις τῆς σαρκὸς ἐλευθέρωσις ἦν πάσης τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος. *Ath. Or.* 3. c. *Arr.* p. 385. vid. p. 618.

Λύχνον ἥψε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα, &c. *Greg. Naz. Or.* 38.

Creatoris ad creaturam descensio credentium est ad æterna provectio. *Leo M. de Nat. Serm.* 5.

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rally to dispense all heavenly blessings to us. Well may we now rejoice, as seeing him come to disclose the way of happiness, to establish the covenant of grace, to void all the obstructions, and subdue all the enemies to our welfare: well may we celebrate this birth, as by its virtue blessing the Patriarchs, enlightening the Prophets, inspiring the Martyrs with faith and courage, enduing all the Saints, that ever have been, with grace, and crowning them with glory; so that in this day we have the passion, the *pasch*, the ascension, the pentecost, the memorials of every saint suggested to us[f]; the joys of all our festivals, do conspire or commence in this; which is the head and spring, which is the fruitful seed, which is the hopeful morning of them all. Πάντα ταῦτα τῆς παρούσης ἡμέρας χάρις ἐστιν· αὕτη γὰρ ἦρξε τῶν ἐφεξῆς ἀγαθῶν. *All these things*, saith St. Gregory Nyssen, *are the grace of this present day, for it began the goods which did in order succeed.*

Greg. Nyss. tom. ii. p. 784.

But waving the numberless benefits so consequent on the nativity, we shall only touch some of those which have a more formal and close relation thereto.

I pass over the contemplation of that sweet harmony between the old and the new world; in which, to our comfortable satisfaction, the sweetest attributes of God (his goodness, his wisdom, his fidelity and constancy) do illustrate themselves, by completion of the ancient promises, prefigurations, and predictions touching this event.

I forbear also to reflect on the happy alteration and amendment of the world, which our Lord's coming did induce, by comparing the state of things before it, with that which followed it; the consideration of which case is very pleasant, and productive of joy. First then,

1. Let us consider, that the nativity doth import the completion of many ancient promises, predictions, and prefigurations concerning it; that whereas all former dispensations of favour and mercy were as preludes or preambles to this; the old Law did aim to represent it in

[f] Οὐκοῦν καὶ τὰ τοῦ Πάσχα καλὰ τῶν περὶ τὴν γένεσιν εὐφημιῶν μέρος ἐστι. *Greg. Nyss.*

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its mysterious pomps; the chief of providential occurrences did intimate it; the Prophets often in their mystical raptures did allude to it, and often in clear terms did express it §; the gracious designs of God, and the longing expectations of mankind being so variously implied in regard thereto; now all is come to be fulfilled, and perfected in most clear, most effectual, most substantial accomplishment; now is sprung up that *seed of the woman*, which, according to the first Gospel preached to Adam, should *bruise the serpent's head;* now is the mystical Isaac, the miraculous *Son of promise*, born; now is that grant to Abraham, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*, made good; now is *Shiloh come*, of whom Jacob foreboded, *unto him the gatherings of the people shall be;* now is that oracle of Moses more than verified, *A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like to me; him shall ye hear;* now *the Star is come out of Jacob*, the vision whereof dazzled Balaam, and stopped him from cursing that people, in which it should arise; now is that oath discharged to David, *Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne;* now those illustrious predictions of Isaiah, *There shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse—A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son; to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be on his shoulders—There shall come out of Sion the deliverer, and shall turn ungodliness from Jacob*, are fully accomplished; now *the righteous Branch*, of which Jeremiah and Zechariah spake, is sprouted forth; and Ezekiel's *One Shepherd*, Daniel's *Son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven;* Micah's *Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from old;* Haggai's *Desire of all nations;* Malachi's *Angel of the Covenant*, and *Sun of Righteousness*, have all in truth appeared: now is that glorious *King* and *Captain* arrived, whom the holy Oracles do so magnificently describe; whom Moses

Gen. iii. 15.
Gen. xxii. 18. Gal. iii. 8,
16. Gen. xlix. 10.
Deut. xviii. 15. Acts iii. 22. vii. 37.
Num. xxiv. 17.
Ps. cxxxiii. 11. Luke i. 33.
Isa. xi. 1. vii. 14. ix. 6. lix. 20.
Rom. xi. 26.
Jer. xxiii 5. xxxiii. 15.
Zech. iii. 8. vi. 12.
Ezek. xxxiv. 23. xxxvii. 24.
Dan. vii. 13.
Mic. v. 2.
Matt. ii. 6.
Hag. ii. 7.
Mal. iii. 1. iv. 2.

§ Sapientia et benignitas Dei ac salutiferi operis mora capaciores nos suæ vocationis effecit, ut quod multis signis, multis vocibus, multisque mysteriis per tot fuerat secula pronunciatum, in his diebus Evangelii non esset ambiguum, &c. *Leo P. de Nat. Serm.* 3.

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and Joshua, whom David and Solomon in so many pat circumstances did foreshadow; whom God would *set upon his holy hill of Sion; the sceptre of whose kingdom is a mighty sceptre;* who should *raise the tabernacle of David that is fallen; before whom all kings shall fall down, and whom all nations should serve;* who *should reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end.*

Psal. ii. 6. xlv. 6. lxxii. 11. Acts xv. 16. Am. ix. 11. Luke i. 33. Dan. vii. 13. Mic. iv. 7. Aug. in Ps. xcvi.

Now what can be more delightful, or satisfactory to our mind, than to reflect on this sweet harmony of things, this goodly correspondence between the old and new world; wherein so pregnant evidences of God's chief attributes, (of his goodness, of his wisdom, of his fidelity and constancy,) all conspiring to our benefit, do shine? Is it not pleasant to contemplate how provident God hath ever been for our welfare? what trains from the world's beginning, or ever since our unhappy fall, he hath been laying to repair and restore us? how wisely he hath ordered all dispensations with a convenient reference and tendency to this masterpiece of grace[h]? how steady he hath been in prosecuting his designs, and how faithful in accomplishing his promises concerning it?

Joh. viii. 56. Ἠγαλλιάσατο.

If the *holy patriarchs did see this day, and were glad;* if a glimpse thereof did cause their hearts *to leap* within them; if its very dawn had on the spirits of the prophets so vigorous an influence[i], what comfort and complacence should we feel in this its real presence, and bright aspect on us! How sensibly should we be affected with this our happy advantage above them; the which our Lord himself then did teach us to estimate duly, when he said, *Blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear: for verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.*

Matt. xiii. 16, 17.

[h] Non itaque novo consilio Deus rebus humanis, nec sera miseratione consuluit, sed a constitutione mundi unam eandemque omnibus causam salutis instituit. *Leo P. de Nat. Serm.* 3.

[i] Magnam enim jucunditatem tunc carpebant ipsi sancti Prophetæ, cum ea videbant in spiritu, non jam impleta, sed adhuc futura. *Aug. in Ps.* xcvi.

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2. Let us consider what alteration our Lord's coming did induce, by comparing the state of things before it to that which followed it. The old world then consisting of two parts, severed by a strong wall of partition, made up of difference in opinion, in practice, in affection, together with a strict prohibition to the one of holding intercourse with the other. Eph. ii. 14. Acts x. 28.

Of one, and that far the greater part, St. Paul hath given us these descriptions and characters: *They were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant, having no hope, and being without God in the world;* they were *by nature the children of wrath and of disobedience;* they were *dead in trespasses and sins, walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience;* they did *walk in the vanity of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart; and being past feeling, did give themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness;* they *had their conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;* being *foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.* Such was the case, the dismally wretched case, of the Gentile world; such were our forefathers, (such after them of course, by fatal consequence, should we have been;) they were in their minds blinded with gross ignorance, and deluded with foul errors; they were in their wills and affections corrupted with great disorder, perverseness, sensuality, malice; they did in their conversation practice all sorts of impiety, iniquity, and impurity; their conceptions of God were very unworthy, and their worship answerably such; (full of sottish, savage, beastly superstitions;) their principles were vain, and their life conformably dissolute; in short, they lived under the domination and influence of wicked spirits, who thence are styled *lords* and *princes of this world, of this air, of this secular darkness:* even of the wisest

Eph. ii. 12. Eph. ii. 3. ii. 1, 2. Eph. iv. 17, 18, 19. Eph. ii. 3. Tit. iii. 3. Col. iii. 7. (Eph. v. 8. Col. ii. 13. 1 Cor. vi. 11. 2 Cor. iv. 4. 1 Thess. iv. 5. 1 Pet. iv. 3. Gal. iv. 8. Rom. i. 29.) Eph. vi. 12. ii. 2. (John xii. 31, xiv 30. xvi. 11. 2 Cor. iv. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 16. Col. i. 13. ii. 15. Acts xxvi. 18.

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among them, (the number of whom, notwithstanding the clatter their writings made, was very small and inconsiderable,) of those who by the conduct of natural light strove to disengage themselves from vulgar mistakes and miscarriages, the case was little better; for even their minds (after all their studious disquisitions and dēbates) proved dark and giddy; full of ignorance, of error, of doubt in regard to the main points of religion and of morality; some of them flatly denying the existence, or (which in effect is the same) the providence of God; the natural distinction between good and evil, the spiritual nature and future subsistence of our souls, the dispensation of rewards and punishments after this life; others wavering in doubt, or having but faint persuasions about these matters; few or none having clear notions, or steady opinions about any such things; whence their practice, in correspondence to their rules, must needs have been very loose, or very lame; so that well might our Apostle say of them, *They became vain in their reasonings, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves wise, they became fools; and as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.*

Διαλογισμοῖς.

Rom. i. 21. —28.

As for the other part, or little parcel of men, the condition of that was also very low; if the rest of the world did lie in dark night, they did live but in a dusky twilight; their religion was much wrapt up in shadow and mystery; they had but dilute ideas of God's nature, and scant discoveries of his will; their law and rule of practice in divers respects was defective and infirm; they were locked under the discipline of childish rudiments, suiting their raw capacities, and under the bondage of slavish yokes, befitting their stubborn dispositions; which defailances in notion their practice commonly did outstrip; being fond, corrupt, hypocritical, void of interior, substantial, and genuine righteousness; as the old Prophets did often complain, and as our Lord, with his Apostles, did urge.

Col. ii. 17. Heb. viii. 5. x. 1.

Rom viii. 3. Gal. iii. 21. Heb. vii. 18. 19.

Such was the state of the world in its parts; and jointly of the whole it may be said, that it was *shut up under sin*

Gal. iii. 22. Rom. xi. 32. iii. 9, 19.

and guilt, under darkness and weakness, under death and corruption, under sorrow and woe; that no full declaration of God's pleasure, no clear overture of mercy, no express grant of spiritual aid, no certain redemption from the filth or the force of sin, from the stroke of death, from due punishment hereafter; no encouragements suitable to high devotion, or strict virtue, were anywise in a solemn way exhibited or dispensed before our Lord's appearance: so that well might all men be then represented as Cimmerians, *sitting in darkness, in the region and shadow of death;* well may we suppose all ages foregoing to have teemed with hope and desire of this happy day; or that, as St. Paul saith, *the whole creation* (that is, all mankind) *groaneth together, and travaileth together until now;* as labouring with pangs of implicit desire, or under a painful sense of needing a Saviour; well might Isaiah thus proclaim his coming; *Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee: for, behold, darkness shall cover the land, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee; and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising:* for, now, *the Lord hath made known his salvation, his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth do see the salvation of our God.*

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Isa. ix. 1. Matt. iv. 16.

Rom. viii. 22.

Isa. lx. 1, 2, 3.

Psal. xcviii. 2, 3.

Now *we are all children of the light, and of the day;* all *do know God from the least to the greatest;* the rarest, the deepest notions are grown common and obvious; every child is instructed in the highest truths, every peasant is become a great philosopher, (beyond Aristotle, or Plato, or Epictetus,) skilful of the best knowledge, able to direct his life in the best way, capable of obtaining the best good.

1 Thess. v. 5. (2 Cor. iii. 18. iv. 6.) Heb. viii. 11. Jer. xxxi. 34.

Now the Spirit of God (the Spirit of direction, of succour, of comfort spiritual) is poured upon all flesh. *Now the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men;* fully instructing them in their duty, and strongly enabling them to perform it, freely offering them mercy,

Acts ii. 17. Joel ii. 28. Tit. ii. 11. Luke xxiv. 47.

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mightily encouraging them with hopes of most blessed rewards.

Eph. iii. 6. ii. 15.

Now Jew and Gentile are reunited and compacted in one body; walking in the same light, and under obligation to the same laws; sharing in a common redemption and inheritance; being inseparably linked together with the bands of faith, of charity, of spiritual fraternity; thus

2 Cor v. 17. *old things are passed away, behold all things are become new,* in virtue and consequence of our Lord's appearance: in contemplation of which so great, so general, so happy a change, how can we forbear to rejoice?

Διάθωσις. Heb. ix. 10.

But farther, that we may yet more nearly touch the point,

3. Let us consider that the nativity of our Lord is a grand instance, a pregnant evidence, a rich earnest of Almighty God's very great affection and benignity toward mankind: for, *In this,* saith St. John, *the love of God was manifested, that God sent his only begotten Son into the world:* and, *Through the tender mercies of our God,* sang old Zechariah, *the dayspring from on high did visit us:* this indeed is the peculiar experiment, wherein that most divine attribute did shew and signalize itself. The power of God doth brightly shine in the creation, the wisdom of God may clearly be discerned in the government of things: but the incarnation of God is that work, is that dispensation of grace, wherein the divine goodness doth most conspicuously display itself. How indeed possibly could God have demonstrated a greater excess of kindness toward us, than by thus, for our sake and good, sending his dearest Son out of his bosom into this sordid and servile state, subjecting him to all the infirmities of our frail nature, exposing him to the worst inconveniences of our low condition[k]? What expressions can signify,

1 John iv. 9. John iii. 16, 17. Eph. ii. 4. Luke i. 78.

Psal. xxxvi. 6. cviii. 4.

[k] Apparuerat ante potentia in rerum creatione, apparebat sapientia in earum gubernatione; sed benignitas misericordiæ nunc maxime apparuit in humanitate. *Bern. de Nat. Serm.* 1.

Semper quidem diversis modis, multisque mensuris humano generi bonitas divina consuluit, et plurima providentiæ suæ munera omnibus retro seculis clementer impertiit; sed in novissimis temporibus omnem abundan-

what comparisons can set out the stupendous vastness of this kindness? If we should imagine, that a great prince should put his only son (a son most lovely, and worthily most beloved) into rags, should dismiss him from his court, should yield him up into the hardest slavery, merely to the intent that he thereby might redeem from captivity the meanest and basest of his subjects, how faint a resemblance would be of that immense goodness, of that incomparable mercy, which in this instance the King of all the world hath declared toward us his poor vassals, his indeed unworthy rebels! SERM. LXXV.

And what greater reason of joy can there be, than such an assurance of his love, on whose love all our good dependeth, in whose love all our felicity consisteth? What can be more delightful than to view the face of our Almighty Lord so graciously smiling upon us?

Should we not be extremely glad, should we not be proud, if our earthly prince by any signal mark would express himself kindly affected to us? How much more should we resent such a testimony of God's favour! how worthily may our souls be transported with a sense of such affection!

4. We may consider our Lord's nativity, as not only expressing simple good-will, but implying a perfect reconciliation, a firm peace, a steady friendship established between God and us; or that it did not only proceed from love, but did also produce love to us. We did stand at a great distance, in estrangement, yea in enmity toward God; our first parents had by presumptuous disobedience revolted from him; and we, insisting on the footsteps of their apostacy, continued in defiance of him; *All men have sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God.—There was not a righteous man upon earth, that did good, and sinned not:* whence unavoidably the wrath of the most holy God was incensed, the justice of the most righteous Lord was engaged against us; thence did issue a sad Rom. iii. 23. ix. 23. Gal iii. 22. Eccles. vii. 20. Leo de Nat. Serm. 2.

tiam solitæ benignitatis excessit; quando in Christo ipsa ad peccatores misericordia, ipsa ad errantes veritas, ipsa ad mortuos vita descendit, &c. *P. Leo M. de Nat. Serm. 4.*

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doom, thence a just sentence of capital punishment was denounced on us; no pretence of favour, no overture of peace, no hope of redress did then appear; we nowise being able to expunge our guilt, to repair our offences, to recover out of that corruption in mind and will, which did seal us up to ruin, indisposing us either to find or to entertain mercy: but our Lord's coming did appease that anger, did mollify that justice, did suspend that condemnation, did close the breach, and *slay the enmity; God*, as the Apostle speaketh, *sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin did condemn sin in the flesh*[1]: for, how can God now avert his face from us, whom his only dear Son hath vouchsafed to make and own for his brethren? How can he look with an eye of displeasure on that nature, wherewith that Son of his love standeth clothed before him? How can he abide offended with our race, in which pure innocence and perfect obedience are found [m]; he now appearing with us, and for us, in whom not the strictest justice nor the shrewdest malice can descry any fault or blemish; *in whom* therefore *God is* thoroughly *well pleased?* Since we have *Emanuel, God with us—God manifested in our flesh—The Lord our righteousness*, partaker of our infirmity, intercessor and advocate for his own flesh and blood, ready to do and suffer whatever God pleaseth to require on our behalf, how can God be against us? Shall God and man persist at distance or disaffection, who are so closely related, who are indeed so intimately united in one person? Shall heaven and earth retain enmity, which have so kindly embraced and kissed each other; since *truth hath sprouted from the earth, and right-*

Eph. ii. 15, 16. Rom. viii. 3. 2 Cor. v. 19. (1 Pet. i. 19. Heb. vii. 26.) John xiv. 30.—ἐν ἐμοὶ οὐκ ἔχει οὐδέν. John xix. 6. —ἐγὼ εὑρίσκω ἐν αὐτῷ αἰτίαν. Matt. iii. 17. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Jer. xxiii. 6. xxxiii. 16. Psal. lxxxv. 11.

[1] Ἀδύνατον γέγονε τῇ φύσει λογικῇ οὔσῃ, καὶ ἑκουσίως ἁμαρτησάσῃ, καὶ ὑπὸ καταδίκην θανάτου γινομένῃ, ἑαυτὴν ἀνακαλίσασθαι εἰς ἐλευθερίαν. *Ath.* p. 638.

Ἀδύνατον ἐτέρως τὸ καθαρὸν καὶ ἀναμάρτητον ὑπ' ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως παραδεχθῆναι, εἰ μὴ θεὸς ἐν σαρκὶ πιστεύοιτο εἶναι, ὁ τὴν ἀναμάρτητον δικαιοσύνην εἰς κόσμον εἰσαγαγών, &c. *Ath. de Incarn. Verbi.*

[m] Τὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ σύμπτωμα εἰς ἀσύγκριτον ἀνάστημα Χριστὸς ἀνιστήσατο, ἐν ὁμοιώματι σαρκὸς ἁμαρτίας ὀφθείς, καὶ κατακρίνας τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐν τῇ σαρκί. *Ath.* p. 620.

Εἰ δὲ μὴ ἐν τῇ ἁμαρτησάσῃ φύσει ἡ ἀναμαρτησία ὤφθη, πῶς κατεκρίθη ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐν τῇ σαρκί; *Id.* p. 368.

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eousness hath looked down from heaven? Shall the war go on, when the great Mediator and Umpire of peace is come; *preaching peace to them that are afar off, and to them that are near?* Can death any longer reign over us, or our disgrace and misery continue, now that *the Prince of life, the Lord of glory, the Captain of salvation* doth appear for our relief?

Isa. ix. 6. Acts x. 36. Eph. ii. 17. 1 Cor. ii. 8.

Now then what can be more worthy of joy, than such a blessed turn of affairs? How can we otherwise than with exceeding gladness solemnize such a peace? a peace accorded with him, who in forces so infinitely doth overmatch us; who at his pleasure can utterly quell us; who with the greatest ease, with less than a word of his mouth, can dash us to nothing, or hurl us down into an abyss of remediless woe: how can we avoid being extremely satisfied at the recovery of his favour and friendship, which alone can be the foundation of our safety and welfare, which is the sole fountain of all good, of all comfort, of all felicity?

5. Our Lord's nativity doth infer a great honour, and a high preferment to us: nowise indeed could mankind be so dignified, or our nature so advanced as hereby: no wisdom can devise a way beyond this, whereby God should honour his most special favourites, or promote them to a nearness unto himself. For hence we become allied to God in a most strait affinity, his eternal Son being made our brother: hence as touching the blood-royal of heaven we do in dignity o'ertop all the creation; so that what the Psalmist uttered concerning man is verified in the most comprehensive sense; *Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet:* for now the Son of man, being also the Son of God, is *the head of all principality and power*, is *the Lord of all things*, is the sovereign prince of all the world, is placed *far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.* This is a peculiar honour, to which the highest angels cannot pretend; for *he took not the nature of angels, but he took the seed of*

Eph. iii. 10, 19.

(Ηνωμένος πατρὶ κατὰ πνεῦμα, ἡμῖν δὲ κατὰ σάρκα. *Ath.* p. 612.)

Psal. viii. 5, 6. Heb. ii. 7, 8.

Col. ii. 10. Eph. ii. 22. Acts x. 36. Eph. i. 21. Phil. ii. 9. 1 Pet. iii. 22.

Heb. ii. 16.

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Abraham; whence those noble creatures are become in a manner inferior to poor us; and, according to just obligation, willingly do adore our nature; for, *when God brought his first begotten Son into the world, he said, Let all the angels of God worship him.* Is not indeed our flesh become adorable, as the true Shechinah, as the everlasting palace of the supreme Majesty, *wherein the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth bodily;* as the most holy shrine of the Divinity; as the orb of *inaccessible light;* as more than all this, if more could be expressed, or if we could expound that text, *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt in us?* May not our soul worthily claim highest respect, all whose faculties (being endued with unmeasurable participations of the Holy Spirit) have been tuned to a perfect harmony with the all-wise understanding and the most pure will of God? yea, which hath been admitted into the nearest consortship, into the strictest union with the eternal Word; hath become an ingredient of him, who is *the wisdom and the power of God?* It was a great dignity that man should be made according to the image of God; but it is a more sublime glory, that God should be made after the image of man, κατὰ πάντα ὁμοιωθείς, *being made like to us in all things*, bating only sin, which is no part of us, but an unnatural excrescence, or a deflection from our nature[n]: how could we be so raised up to God, as by his thus stooping down to us? What can be imagined more honourable to us, than that God should deem us worthy of such condescension? This, this indeed is our exaltation, that God for us should express not only so vast charity, but so prodigious humility.

Heb. i. 6. Ἡ σὰρξ ἐθεολογήθη. Ath. p. 597. Col. ii. 9. Totum corpus implet tota divinitas. *Leo de Nat. Serm.* 10. John i. 14. iii. 34. 1 Cor. i. 24. Heb. ii. 17.

And is it not good matter of joy to be thus highly graced[o]? When are men better pleased than when they are preferred; than especially, when from the meanest

[n] Qui cum origini humanæ multum dederit, quod nos ad imaginem suam fecit, reparationi nostræ longe amplius tribuit, cum servili formæ ipse se Dominus coaptavit. *Leo de Nat. Serm* 4.

[o] Exultent ergo in laudem Dei corda credentium, et mirabilia ejus confiteantur filii hominum, quoniam in hoc præcipue Dei opere humilitas nostra cognoscit, quanti eam suus conditor æstimârit. *Leo Serm.* 4.

state, *from the dunghill*, or *from the dust*, they *are raised to be set among princes*, and *made to inherit the throne of glory?* Wherefore this being our case, that we sons of earth, *children of corruption*, and *brethren of worms*, (in Job's style;) we exiles of paradise, we heirs of death and misery; we, that by our nature are the lowest of all intelligent creatures, that by our merits were debased *beneath the beasts that perish*, that we are assumed to such relations, that we are ennobled to such a pitch, that our nature hath mounted so high above all creatures, with what enlargement of heart should we entertain a dispensation so wonderful! how welcome should that day be which doth introduce it[p]! SERM. LXXV. Psal. cxiii. 7, 8. 1 Sam. ii. 8. Job xvii. 14. Psal. xlix. 12.

6. Finally, if we survey all principal causes of joy and special exultation, we shall find them all concurring in this event.

Is a messenger of good news embraced with joy? Behold the great Evangelist is come, with his mouth full of news, most admirable, most acceptable: he, who doth acquaint us, that God is well pleased, that man is restored, that *the adversary is cast down*, that paradise is set open, and immortality retrieved, that truth and righteousness, peace and joy, salvation and happiness are descended and come to dwell on earth; he of whom the Prophet told, *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth;* he who doth himself thus declare the drift and purport of his message; *The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, to comfort all that mourn.* Rev. xii. 10. John xiv. 30. Luke x. 18. Isa. lii. 7. Nah. i. 15. Rom. x. 15. Isa. lxi. 1, 2. Luke iv. 18, 19.

Is the birth of a prince by honest subjects to be com-

[p] Hic infirmitatis nostræ suscipiens conditionem, propter quos ad infera descendit, eosdem in cœlestibus collocavit. *Leo de Nat. 5.*

SERM. LXXV. memorated with joyous festivity? Behold a Prince born to all the world! a Prince undertaking to rule mankind with sweetest clemency and exact justice; a Prince bringing with him all peace and prosperity; *in whose days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely*; who shall protect us in assured rest and safety; shall secure us from all danger and mischief; shall achieve most gallant and glorious exploits in our behalf; shall vanquish all the enemies of our welfare; shall rescue us from the worst slaveries and mischiefs; shall settle us in a most free and happy state; he *who bringeth salvation from our enemies, and from the hands of all that hate us*; that, *being delivered from the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.* Now therefore it is seasonable to cry out, *Allelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him.*

Isa. xi. 2. Psal. xlv. & lxxii. Jer. xxiii. 6. Luke i. 71, 74, 75. Rev. xix. 6, 7, xi. 15.

May victory worthily beget exultation? See the invincible Warrior doth issue forth into the field, *conquering and to conquer:* he that shall baffle and rifle *the strong one*, our formidable adversary; that shall rout all the forces of hell, and *triumph over* the powers of darkness; that utterly shall defeat sin, and slay death itself; that shall subdue the world, and lay all things prostrate at his feet; behold the *Captain of our salvation*, arrayed with glorious humility, and armed with a mighty patience; see, the great blow is struck, at which the infernal powers do stagger; the devil's pride and envy are abased, all the enemies are amazed, are daunted, are confounded at his presence; they cannot stand, they break, they scatter, they flee before him.

Isa. ix. 3. Rev. vi. 2. Luke xi. 22. Col. ii. 15. (John vi. 33.) 1 John iii. 8. Rom. xvi. 20.

Is a proclamation of peace, after rueful wars, to be solemnized with alacrity? Behold then everlasting peace between heaven and earth, a general peace among men, a sound peace between each good man and himself are settled and published; the illustrious herald, the noble hostage of them is arrived; *the Prince of peace* himself doth bring all peace unto us.

Eph. ii. 17. (Isa. lvii. 2.) Acts. x. 36. Isa. ix. 6.

Is satisfaction of desire and hope very pleasant? Behold

the *desire of all nations, the expectation of Israel*, he for whom the whole creation groaned, is come. SERM. LXXV.

Is recovery of liberty delectable to poor slaves and captives? Behold the *Redeemer is come out of Sion;* the precious ransom, sufficient to purchase the freedom of many worlds, is laid down; unblemished innocence, purity, and perfection appearing in human nature, have procured a releasement for us; have unlocked the prison of sin detaining us, have knocked off the shackles of guilt sorely pinching and galling our consciences; have wrested us from the hands of those proud masters, who claimed a right, who exercised a most tyrannous power over us [q]; he is come, that *proclaimeth liberty to the captives, and opening of the prison to them that are bound*; the time is come, of which the prophet foretold, *The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.* (Gal. iii. 22.) Isa. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18. Isa. xxxv. 10.

Is an overture of health acceptable to sick and languishing persons? Behold the great Physician, endued with admirable skill, and furnished with infallible remedies, is come, to cure us of our maladies, and ease us of our pains; to bind up our wounds, and to pour in balm (the most sovereign balm of his own blood) into them; to free us, not only from all mortiferous diseases, but from mortality itself: he, who was *sent to bind up and heal the broken hearted;* he, who *himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses;* he, of whom the Prophet (in relation to corporal, and much more to spiritual infirmities) did foretel;—*God will come and save you; then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing*; he, whose art no disease can resist, who is able to cure our most desperate, our most inveterate distempers; to heal the corruption and impotency of our nature, to void the ignorances and errors of Luke x. 33. Matt. ix. 12. 1 Pet. ii. 24. Isa. lxi. 1. Luke iv. 18. Isa. liii. 4. Matt. viii. 17. Isa. xxxv. 4, 5, 6. Matt. xi. 5. Luke v. 17. (John xii. 40. Acts x. 38. Luke x. 34.)

[q] Nam superbia hostis antiqui non immerito sibi in omnes homines jus tyrannicum vindicabat; nec indebito dominatu premebat, quos a mandato Dei spontaneos in obsequium suæ voluntatis allexerat. *Leo de Nat. Serm.* 2.

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our understanding, to correct the stupidity of our hearts, the perverseness of our wills, the disorder of our affections, to mitigate our anguish of conscience, and cleanse our sores of guilt; by various efficacious medicines, by the wholesome instructions of his doctrine, by the powerful inspirations of his grace, by the refreshing comforts of his Spirit, by the salutary virtue of his merits and sufferings.

(Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Eph. ii. 10.)

Is mirth seasonable on the day of marriage? Behold the greatest wedding that ever was is this day solemnized; heaven and earth are contracted; divinity is espoused to humanity; a sacred, an indissoluble knot is tied between God and man; *The Bridegroom is come forth out of his chamber, (verbum Dei de utero virginali,)* clad in his nuptial garment of flesh, and ready to wed the Church, his beloved spouse[r]; *Let us therefore be glad and rejoice; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.*

Joel ii. 16

Rev. xix. 7.

Is the access of a good friend to be received with cheerful gratulation? Behold the dearest and best friend of all mankind (most able, most willing, most ready to perform all good offices, to impart wholesome advice, needful aid, sweet converse, and seasonable consolation) is arrived to visit us, to sojourn with us, to dwell in us for ever.

Is opportune relief grateful to persons in a forlorn condition, pinched with extreme want, or plunged in any hard distress? Behold a merciful, a bountiful, a mighty Saviour and succourer, undertaking *to comfort all that mourn*, inviting all such to receive from him a plentiful supply for their needs, a comfortable ease in their pressures, a happy riddance from their calamities; who *crieth* aloud, *If any one thirsteth, let him come to me and drink; Come to me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

Ἐκραξε, Joh. vii 37. Isa. lv. 1. xliv. 3. Mat. xi. 28.

Is the sun-rising comfortable, after a tedious, darksome, and cold night? See, *the Sun of righteousness is risen with*

Mal. iv. 2.

[r] In natali Domini quasi in nuptiis spiritualibus sponsæ suæ Ecclesiæ Christus adjunctus est—tunc processit sponsus de thalamo suo, hoc est, verbum Dei de utero virginali. *Aug. de temp. Serm.* 2.

Ἡ παῤθὰς ἐν ᾗ ὁ λόγος ἐνυμφεύσατο τὴν σάρκα. *Procl. in Eph.* p. 1.

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healing in his wings, dispensing all about his pleasant rays and kindly influences: *The dayspring from on high hath visited us;* diffusing an universal light upon the souls of men, whereby the night of ignorance is dispelled, the spectres of error are vanished, the mists of doubt are scattered; whereby we clearly and assuredly discern all truths of importance to us, and worthy of our knowledge; concerning the nature and attributes, the works and providence, the will and pleasure of God; concerning ourselves, our nature and original, our duty and interest, our future state, and final doom: *Our light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon us; the light of the world, the true light, enlightening every man,* by whose lustre *all flesh may see the salvation of God,* and *which guideth our feet in the way of peace,* doth visibly shine forth upon us.

Luke i. 78. Isa. lx. 1. John viii. 12. ix. 5. i. 9. Luke iii. 6. i. 79.

Never indeed did heaven with so fair and serene a countenance smile upon earth, as then it did, when this (ἀστὴρ λαμπρὸς καὶ ὀρθρινός,) *bright and morning star* did spring up above our horizon, bringing this goodly day; and with it shedding life and cheer among us.

Rev. xxii. 16.

From this auspicious day did commence the revocation of that fatal curse, by which we were expelled from paradise, adjudged to death, and committed to hell; from thence we became reinstated in a condition of hope, and in a fair capacity of happiness; from thence is to be dated a return of joy into this region of disconsolateness. In this nativity mankind was born, or did revive from manifold deaths; from a legal, a moral, a natural, an eternal death; from lying dead in irreparable guilt, and under an insuperable power of sin; from having our bodies irrecoverably dissolved by corruption, and our souls immersed into that *second* more ghastly *death* of perpetual incurable anguish.

It is in effect therefore the birthday of the world; the

[a] It is the birthday of the Church. Generatio enim Christi origo est populi Christiani, et natalis capitis natalis est corporis. *P. Leo de Nat. Serm.* 6.

Sicut cum Christo in passione crucifixi, in resurrectione resuscitati, in ascensione ad dextram Patris collocati, ita cum ipso sumus in hac nativitate congeniti. *Ibid.*

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beginning of a new, better, eternal life to men, (offered to all, and effectually bestowed on those who will embrace it,) which we now do celebrate. All reason therefore we have to rejoice most heartily and most abundantly: as the goods thence accruing to us are in multitude innumerable, in quality inestimable, in duration immense; so in some correspondence should our joy be very intense, very effuse, very stable; the contemplation of them should infuse somewhat of that *unspeakable joy*, whereof St. Peter speaketh; we should *be filled*, according to St. Paul's expression, *with all joy and peace in believing* them; we should *hold fast*, as the Apostle to the Hebrews adviseth, *the confidence and rejoicing of hope*, grounded on them, *firm to the end.*

Χαρᾷ ἀνεκλαλήτῳ. 1 Pet. i. 8. Rom. xv. 13. Phil. i. 25. Heb. iii. 6. Rom. xii. 12.

Having so many, so great causes of joy, are we not very stupid, are we not strangely cross and perverse, if we neglect so pleasant a duty?

To conclude: Of all the days that rise upon us, this undoubtedly is the queen, crowned by God's own hand with sovereign blessings; God hath avowed it to be the day of his peculiar making, and therefore of our special rejoicing; for thus of old the inspired Psalmist did teach and exhort us to keep Christmas: *This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad therein.*

Psal. cxviii. 24. Matt. xxi. 9, 42. 1 Pet. ii. 7. Acts iv. 11.

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THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST FORETOLD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Acts iii. 18.

But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his Prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

MANY good arguments there are, different in kind, which conspire to persuade the truth of our religion; such as are the intrinsic reasonableness, excellency, and perfection of its doctrine; the miraculous works performed in attestation thereto; the special favour of Providence declared in the support and propagation thereof: but upon no other ground do the Scriptures so much build its truth, and our obligation to embrace it, as upon the exact correspondence and conformity thereof to all the ancient Scriptures, which did foreshew or foretell its revelation and introduction into the world; to those especially which described the personal characters, circumstances, and performances of our Lord: to this our Lord, in his discourses and disputes with incredulous people, referred them; *Search the Scriptures*, said he, *because in them ye expect to have eternal life*; (that is, to find the true way of saving truth leading thereto;) *and those are they which testify of me*: by this he instructed and convinced his Disciples; *beginning from Moses and from all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning him-*

John v. 39.

Luke xxiv. 27. xxii. 37. i. 70.

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self: and, *These* (said he to them presently before his departure) *are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me:* this the Apostles, in all their preaching, (whereby they taught, proved, and persuaded the Christian doctrine,) did chiefly insist upon; *Moses*, saith St. Peter, *truly said unto the Fathers, yea, and all the Prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days;* and, *To him*, saith he again, *give all the Prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.* And of St. Paul it is said, that *he mightily convinced the Jews—shewing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was the Christ;* and—*he expounded, and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses, and out of the Prophets:* thus the chief Apostles and founders of our religion in their public discourses; and in their Epistles they observe the same method; as particularly asserting Christian doctrines and duties by the testimonies of Prophetical Scriptures, so generally affirming our religion to be chiefly grounded on them; *of which salvation* (saith St. Peter, concerning the salvation exhibited by the Gospel) *the Prophets did inquire, and search diligently, who prophesied of the grace to come unto you;* and (in regard to the conviction of others) he seems to prefer the attestation of this kind before the special revelation immediately made to the Apostles; for having spoken of it, he subjoins, καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον· *We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well, that ye do take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.* And St. Paul saith, that *the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, was then made manifest, and by the prophetical Scriptures, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations, to the obedience of faith;* and, *The holy Writings*, he telleth Timothy, *were able to make him wise to the salvation*, which is, *by the faith of Jesus Christ;* that

Luke xxiv. 44.
Acts iii. 22. 24.
Acts x. 43. xiii. 27. xv. 15. xxiv. 14.
John i. 45. Acts xviii. 28. xxviii. 23.
1 Pet. i. 10.
2 Pet. i. 19.
Rom. xvi. 25, 26. i. 2.
2 Tim. iii. 15.

is, they were able to shew and persuade to him the truth of Christianity, which promiseth salvation to all that heartily embrace it and observe its laws.

Such a stress was laid upon this probation by the founders of our religion; and no wonder; for that it is not only extremely forcible in itself, but hath some particular uses, and some peculiar advantages beyond others. The foreknowledge of future contingent events, (such as were many of those concerning our Saviour, depending upon the freest acts of human will,) as it is for the manner of attaining it most incomprehensible to us, so it is most proper to God, and by all men so acknowledged; future contingencies being secrets which no man, no angel, no creature can dive into, they being not discernible in their causes, which are indeterminate; nor in themselves, who are finite. The prediction therefore of such events could not otherwise than proceed from his pleasure; neither could he yield it in way of favour and approbation to that which was not perfectly true and good: this way therefore doth absolutely confirm the truth and goodness of Christian doctrine; it withal manifests the great worth and weight thereof, as implying the particular regard and care God had of it, designing it so anciently, laying trains of providence toward it, and preparing such evidences for the confirmation thereof; it together into the bargain maintaineth the truth of the Jewish dispensation, the sincerity of the ancient Patriarchs and Prophets, and the vigilant care the divine goodness hath always had over the state of religion, and toward the welfare of mankind; never leaving it destitute of some immediate revelations from himself. It had a peculiar aptitude to convert the Jews, who were possessed with a full persuasion concerning the veracity and sanctity of their ancient Prophets; and could not therefore doubt concerning the truth of that, which appeared conformable to that which they had foretold should be declared and dispensed for their benefit This probation also hath this advantage, that it singly taken doth suffice to convince; whereas others can hardly do it otherwise than in conjunction with one another, and

SERM. LXXVI. especially with its aid: for the goodness of the doctrine may be contested in some points; and however good it seem, it may be imputed to human invention: strange effects may be deemed producible by other causes beside divine power; and they may be suffered to be done for other ends than for confirmation of truth; they are also commonly transient, and thence most liable to doubt. Providence also is in many cases so mysterious and unsearchable, that the incredulous will never allow any inferences to be drawn from it: but the plain correspondence of events to the standing records of ancient prophecies (obvious and conspicuous to every one that will consult and compare them) concerning a person to be sent by God, who should have such circumstances, and be so qualified, who should in God's name preach such doctrines and perform such works, is a proof, which alone may assure any man, that such a person doth come from God, and is in what he declareth or doeth approved by him: no counterfeiting can here find place; no evasion can be devised from the force of this proof.

This way therefore of discourse our Lord and his Apostles (whose business it was by the most proper and effectual methods to subdue the reasons of men to the *obedience of faith* and entertainment of Christian truth) did especially use; as generally in respect to all things concerning our Lord, so particularly in regard to his passion; declaring it to happen punctually according to what had been foreseen by God, and thence foreshewed by his Prophets, rightly understood: *He took the twelve*, saith St. Luke of our Lord, *and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the Prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished: for he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge him, and put him to death.* And again, after his resurrection, he thus reproves his Disciples; *O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?* They did not then (partly being blinded

Luke xviii. 31, 32, 33.

Luke xxiv. 25, 26, 46.

with prejudice, partly not having used due industry, and perhaps not excelling in natural capacity, however not yet being sufficiently enlightened by divine grace) apprehend, or discern, that, according to the prophetical instructions, our Lord was so to suffer; but afterward, when he had *opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures*, they did see, and specially urge this point; then St. Peter declared, that *the Spirit of Christ, which was in the Prophets, did testify beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*; then it was their manner to *reason* (as is said of St. Paul) *out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered: saying none other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come, that Christ should suffer*; *delivering first of all, that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures:* this is that which in my text St. Peter doth insist upon, affirming about the passion of Christ, that it not only had been predicted by one, or more, but foreshewed by an universal consent of all the Prophets; to illustrate and confirm which assertion of his, is the scope of our present discourse; to perform which after having briefly touched the state of the matter in hand, we shall apply ourselves.

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Luke xxiv. 45.

1 Pet. i. 11.

Acts xvii. 2, 3. xxvi. 22, 23.

1 Cor. xv. 3.

That the Messias was to come in an humble and homely manner; (without appearance of worldly splendor or grandeur;) that he was to converse among men in a state of external poverty and meanness; that he was to cause offences, and find oppositions in his proceedings; that he was to be repulsed and rejected, to be hated and scorned, to be disgracefully and harshly treated, to be grievously persecuted and afflicted; yea, that at last he was to be prosecuted, condemned, and executed as a malefactor, is a truth indeed, which the Jews (although they firmly believed and earnestly expected the coming of a Messias) did not, and indeed were hardly capable to entertain. It was a point repugnant to the whole frame of their conceits; yea, inconsistent with the nature and drift of their religion, as they did understand it; for their religion in its surface (deeper than which their gross fancy could not

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penetrate) did represent earthly wealth, dignity, and prosperity, as things most highly valuable; did propound them as very proper, if not as the sole rewards of piety and obedience; did imply consequently the possession of them to be certain arguments of the divine good-will and regard: they could not therefore but esteem poverty, affliction, and disgrace, as curses from heaven, and plain indications of God's disfavour toward those on whom they fell: they particularly are said to have conceited, that to be rich was a needful qualification for a prophet: (no less needful, than to be of a good complexion, of a good capacity, of a good conversation and life:) *Spiritus Dei non requiescit super pauperem, the Spirit of God doth not rest upon a poor man;* (that is, no special communications of grace, or of wisdom and goodness, are by God ever afforded to persons of a low and afflicted condition;) being a maxim, which they had framed, and which currently passed among them: that he, therefore, who was designed to be so notable a prophet; who was to have the honour of being so special an instrument of promoting God's service and glory; who therefore should be so highly favoured by God, that he should appear despicable, and undergo great afflictions, was a notion that could not but seem very absurd; that could not otherwise than be very abominable to them. They had farther (in congruity to these prejudices, abetted by that extreme self-love and self-flattery, which were peculiar to that nation,) raised in themselves a strong opinion, that the Messias was to come in a great visible state and power; to achieve deeds of mighty prowess and renown; to bring the nations of the world into subjection under him; and so to reign among them in huge majesty and prosperity. When Jesus therefore (however otherwise answerable in his circumstances, qualifications, and performances, to the prophetical characters of the Messias) did first appear such as he did, with some pretences, or intimations rather, that hewas the Messias, their stomach presently rose at it; they were exceedingly scandalized at him; they deemed him not only *a madman* (one possessed or distracted) and

Matt. xvi. 20.

Matt. xiii. 57. xxvi. 65.

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an impostor, but *a blasphemer*; for no less than blasphemy, they took it to be for so mean and pitiful a wretch (as to their eyes he seemed) to assume unto himself so high a dignity, and so near a relation unto God, as being the Messias did import. We even see the Disciples themselves of our Lord so deeply imbued with this national prejudice, that, even after they had avowed him for the Christ, they could scarce with patience hear him foretelling what grievous things should befall him: St. Peter himself, upon that occasion, even just after he seriously had confessed him to be the Christ, *did*, as it is expressed, *take him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord:* yea, presently after that our Lord most plainly had described his sufferings to them, they could not forbear dreaming of a kingdom, and of being grandees therein; yea, farther, even after our Lord's passion and resurrection, this fancy still possessed them; for even then they demanded of him, whether he would *at that time restore the kingdom unto Israel;* meaning such an external visible kingdom.

Matt. xvi. 22. xvii. 2. John xvi. 12.

Matt. xx. 21, 25.

Acts i. 6.

Hence of all things, notifying the Messias, this seemeth to be the only particular, which in general the Jews did not, or would not, see and acknowledge; and this caused them to oversee all other glorious marks, how clearly soever shining in and about the person of Jesus; this cloud hindered them from discerning the excellency of his doctrine, from regarding the sanctity of his life, from being duly affected with the wonderfulness of his works, from minding, or from crediting all the testimonies from heaven ministered unto him; this, as St. Paul telleth us, was the main *scandal*, which obstructed their embracing the Gospel. As it was their ignorance or error in this point, which disposed them to persecute our Lord; (*nisi enim ignoratus nihil pati posset*, as Tertullian saith; *if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory*, saith St. Paul;) so it was that which maintained their obstinate hatred of his name and memory; although graced with so illustrious testimonies of divine power and providence.

1 Cor. i. 23. Acts xiii. 27. iii. 17. John xv. 21.

Tert. in Marc. iii. 6. 1 Cor. ii. 8.

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We cannot therefore here, as in other particulars concerning our Lord, allege the general consent of God's people in expounding the Prophets according to our sense, this being one of these points, in respect to which the Prophets themselves did foresee and foretel their perverse stupidity and incredulity; that *they should look, and not see; hear, and not understand;* yielding herein special occasion to that complaint, *Who hath believed our report?* Yet notwithstanding their affected and culpable blindness, there is no particular concerning the Messias in the ancient Scriptures, either more frequently in way of mystical insinuation and adumbration glanced at, or more clearly in direct and plain language expressed; or which also by reasonable deduction thence may be more strongly inferred than this.

Vid. Tert. ibid.
Isa. vi. 9. Matt. xiii. 13.
Ezek. xii. 2. Acts xxviii. 26.
Isa. liii. 1.

1. I say, first, it is frequently glanced at by mystical insinuations; for explaining the intent of which assertion, we shall premise somewhat, which may serve to declare the pertinency of many citations produced out of the ancient Scripture in the New Testament; the which, together with others connected with them, or bearing just analogy to them, we also, being assured of their design by the authority of our Lord and his Apostles, may safely presume after them to apply to the same purposes.

We may then consider, that the all-wise God, (who *worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*, and *to whom all things are present,*) having *before eternal times*, as St. Paul speaketh, determined in due time to send the Messias, for accomplishing the greatest design that ever was to be managed in this world, (that which should bring the highest glory to himself, and procure the richest benefits to the principal of his creatures here,) did by his incomprehensible providence so order things, that all the special dispensations preceding it should have a fit tendency and an advantageous reference thereto: so that, when it came upon the stage, it might appear that the main of the plot consisted therein; and that whatever was acted before had principally a respect thereto. As therefore from the beginning of things God did in a gra-

Eph. i. 11. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2.
1 Cor. ii. 7. Eph. i. 3. iii. 9. Rom. xvi. 25. Col. i. 26.

dual method make real preparations towards it, by several steps imparting discoveries of his mind about it, or in order thereto, (somewhat to Adam himself, more to Abraham and the Patriarchs, somewhat farther to Moses, much more yet to divers of the Prophets, among his chosen people, who not only foretold largely concerning it, but delivered divers kinds of instruction conformable to it, and conducible to the promoting and entertainment thereof,) so he did also take especial care by many apposite representations, (νοητὰ θεωρήματα, *intelligible spectacles*, or objects of mental speculation, Eusebius calleth them,) handsomely inserted into all his dispensations, to set it out, and to insinuate his meaning about it; that so it might at length shew itself with more solemnity, and less surprise; the most eminent persons, therefore, whom he raised up, and employed in his affairs, tending to that end, as they did resemble the Messias, in being instruments of God's particular grace and providence, (being indeed inferior Christs and Mediators, partial Saviours and Redeemers of his people, as they are sometimes called;) so they were ordered in several circumstances of their persons, in divers actions they performed, in the principal accidents befalling them, to represent him: (becoming εἰκονικοὶ Χριστοὶ, *Christs in image*, as Eusebius again styleth them:) the rites also and services of religion instituted by them in God's name were adapted to the same purpose; they and all things about them, by God's especial direction and wise care, being fitted so as to be congruous emblems and shadows prefiguring Christ, and whatever appertained to him: thus was Adam, as St. Paul calleth him, *a type of Christ*; and Abel, Melchisedec, Isaac, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Zorobabel, are intimated to have been such; the most signal things done by them, or befalling them, having been suited to answer somewhat remarkable concerning him; so that we may say of them all, as the Apostle to the Hebrews did of the Jewish priests, *they served to the subindication and shadowing of heavenly things*. In David particularly this relation is so plain, that because thereof, in the prophets

Euseb. Hist. i. 3.

Psal. cv. 15. Isa. xlv. 1. Heb. viii. 5. Gal. iii. 19. Neh. ix. 27. Acts vii 35.

Euseb. Hist. i. 14.

Heb. viii. 5. Exod. xxv. 40.

Rom. v. 24. Vid. Euseb. ibid.

Heb. viii. 5. Οἵτινες ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ λατρεύουσι τῶν ἐπουρανίων.

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Jer. xxx. 9. Hos. iii. 5. Ezek. xxxiv. 23. 24. xxxvii. 24, 25. (Heb. viii. 5. x. 1. ix. 23. Gal. iv. 24. Col. ii. 17)

1 Cor. x. 11, 6. 1 Pet. i. 12.

It is also (both for illustration and proof of these things) to be observed, that because those eminent servants of God were representatives of Christ, many things are spoken of them, as such; many things are ascribed to them, which only, or chiefly, were intended of him; their names are used as veils to cover divers things concerning him, which it seemed to divine wisdom not so convenient in a more open and clear manner to disclose promiscuously to all men. That this observation is true; that, I say, under the names of persons representing Christ (or of things, we may add, adumbrating his things) many things are intimated principally concerning him and his dispensations, may be collected and confirmed from hence, that many things are attributed to persons (and to things also) which do not agree to them; many things were promised which appear never accomplished, except after an improper and hyperbolical manner of expression, or according to an enormous wideness of interpretation; such as do not well seem to suit the nature of true histories,

and serious promises: thus, for instance, many things are foretold concerning the large extent and prosperous state of the Jewish Church; which history and experience do testify never (according to strictness of literal acceptation, yea not in any tolerable degree, near the height of what the words import) to have come to pass: thus also, as the Apostle to the Hebrews argueth, effects are attributed to the Jewish rites and sacrifices, which according to the nature of things cannot belong to them, otherwise than as substitutes and shadows of things more high in substance and efficacy: thus also what is with solemn oath promised to Solomon (concerning the vast extent and endless duration of his empire in righteousness, peace, and prosperity; together with his mighty acts, and successful achievements) doth not appear directly in any competent measure to have been accomplished: thus also David (as St. Peter in the 2d of the Acts observeth, and groundeth his argumentation on it) speaketh divers things of himself, which cannot be conceived properly and literally agreeable to him: such things therefore (having some truth under them) are reasonably supposed to be intimations of somewhat appertaining to the future more perfect state of things under the Messias; to concern him (who was to be *the end of the law)* and his dispensation, which was to be the accomplishment of all things predicted and presignified: this is that which St. Austin signifieth, when he saith of Christ, that *Him all the promises of the Jewish nation, all their prophecies, priesthoods, sacrifices, their temple, and all their sacraments whatever did resound,* or express [t].

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Isa. xxv. 8.

Heb. x. 4.

Psal. xlv. lxxii. lxxxiii. &c.

Acts ii. 29.

Rom. x. 4. Luke xxii. 37. 1 Pet. i. 10 &c.

Neither are these things only said according to suppositions assumed in the New Testament; but they agree, as to their general importance, to the sense of the ancient Jews, who did conceive such mysterious references often to lie couched under the letter of the Scriptures: they did suppose every where a *Midrash*, or mystical sense; which

[t] Quem Christum—omnia gentis illius promissa, omnes prophetiæ, sacerdotia, sacrificia, templum, et cuncta omnino sacramenta sonuerunt. *Aug. ad Volus. Ep.* 3.

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they very studiously (even to an excess of curiosity and diligence) searched after: it was a constant and confident opinion of their doctors, that all things in Moses's law were typical, and capable of allegorical exposition; and Philo's writings (composed immediately after our Saviour's times) do shew that opinion then to have been passable. We have also several instances and intimations thereof in the New Testament; neither is it probable, that our Lord and the Apostles would, in their discourses and disputations with the Jews, have used this way of alleging and interpreting passages of Scripture, if they in general had not admitted and approved it.

Vid. Capell. in Exerc. ad Zohar.

Vid. Chrys. tom. vi. p. 649, &c. 658, &c.

Why God should choose to express matters of this nature in such a manner, we need not to determine; it might be perhaps for reasons only known to himself, above our ken or cognizance: yet divers probable reasons may be assigned for it, yea some more than probable, seeing they are expressed or hinted in Scripture. It might be for a decent and harmonious discrimination of times, of dispensations, of persons; it might be from the depth of things to conciliate reverence to them, and to raise the price of knowing them, by the difficulty of attaining thereto; it might be by exercise to improve the understandings of men, to inflame their desire, to excite their industry, to provoke their devotion, to render them modest and humble; it might be for occasion to reward an honest and diligent study of God's word, and to convey special gifts of interpretation; it might be to conceal some things from some persons unworthy or unfit to know them, especially from haughty and self-conceited persons; it might be to use the ignorance of some, as a means to produce some great events; such as was the misusing and persecuting our Lord: for such reasons it might be, and there is no good reason against it; for it cannot be supposed necessary, that all things should be plainly discovered at all times, and to all persons; it is evident that some things are couched in parabolical and mysterious expressions; it is particularly the manner of prophetical instruction frequently to involve things, the full and clear know-

Rev. ii. 7. xiii. 18. xvii. 9. Matt. xiii. 9. xxiv. 15. Dan. ix. 1. John v. 39. Luke xxiv. 45. 1 Cor. xii. 10. xiv. 26. Eph. i. 9, 10. Matt. xiii. 13. xi. 25. vii. 6. 1 Cor. ii. 8. Acts iii. 17.

Gal. iv. 4. Eph. i. 10. 1 Tim. ii. 6.

ledge of which is not congruous to every season, not suitable to every capacity; but reserved for times, and persons, for which the divine wisdom only knows them most proper. SERM. LXXVI.

These things being thus premised, we come to our particular case, and say, that (according to what our Lord and his Apostles teach) the Messiah's being to suffer was in divers passages of the ancient Scriptures prefigured. Supposing the thing itself determined to be, there are peculiar reasons, why it rather so, than in a more open manner, should be represented, contained in those words of Tertullian: *The sacrament indeed,* saith he, *of Christ's passion ought to have been figured in the* (ancient) *predications; forasmuch as that the more incredible it was, (if it should have been preached nakedly,) the more offensive it would have been; and the more magnificent it was, the more it was to be overshadowed, that the difficulty of understanding it might be cause of seeking of God's grace* [u]. Supposing it also that it should be, it is plain that the passages about Abel, Isaac, Josias, Jeremiah, and the like, may congruously be applied thereto; that the elevation of the Brazen Serpent, and the slaying the Paschal Lamb may appositely represent it; the Jewish priests, with all their sacrifices, may also with reason be brought in, and accommodated thereto: these things indeed by themselves solitarily are not apt peremptorily to evince, that it should be; yet do they handsomely suit it, and adorn the supposition thereof; according to the notion premised about the figurative relation between the matters of the old world before the Messias, and the new one after him. But with a clearer evidence and stronger force we may affirm, that the Messiah's sufferings were implied in the afflictions ascribed to his representative king David, such as he in several Psalms (in the 35th, 69th, 109th, 118th, and especially in the 22d Psalm) describeth them; wherein divers passages,

[u] Utique sacramentum passionis ipsius figurari in prædicationibus oportuerat, quantoque incredibile, tanto magis scandalum futurum, quantoque magnificum, tanto magis adumbrandum; ut difficultas intellectûs gratiam Dei quæreret. *Tert. in Jud.* 10.

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expressing the extreme sadness and forlornness of his condition, occur, which by the history of his life do not so well, according to the literal signification of words, appear congruous to his person; which therefore there is a necessity, or at least much reason, that they should be applied to the Messias, whom that holy King did represent.

Which being admitted, comparing the passages we find there to that which befell Jesus, we may observe an admirable harmony; there being scarce any part of his affliction in his life, or at any circumstance thereof at his death, which is not in express and emphatical terms there set out. There we have expressed his low and despicable estate; *(I am a worm, and no man; the reproach of men, and despised of the people:)*—the causeless hatred and enmity of the populacy and of the great ones toward him; *(They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head; they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty; they compassed me about with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause:)*—the ingrateful requital for all the good intended and performed by him; *(They rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love;)*—their rejecting him; *(The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner:)*—their insidious and calumnious proceedings against him; *(Without cause have they hid for me their net in a pit, which without cause they have digged for my soul.* And, *False witnesses did rise up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not.* And, *The mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue:)*—their bitter insulting over him in his affliction; (*But in mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together; yea, the abjects gathered themselves together against me:*) *They persecute him, whom thou hast smitten, and they talk to the grief of those, whom thou hast wounded:* καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ ἄλγος τῶν τραυμάτων μὲ προσέθηκαν, *and to the smart of my wounds they have added*; (say the LXX.)—their scornful reviling, flouting, and mocking him; *(All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot the lip, they shake the head, saying,*

Ps. xxii. 6.

Psal. lxix. 4. xxxv. 7. cix. 3.

Psal. xxxv. 12. cix. 5. cxviii. 22.

Ps. xxxv. 7, 11. cix. 2.

Psal. xxxv. 15. lxix. 26.

Psal. xxii. 7, 8.

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He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighteth in him. And *I became a reproach unto them; when they looked upon me, they shaked their heads: They opened their mouth wide against me, and said, Aha, aha, our eye hath seen it.* Ἐπείρασάν με, ἐξεμυκτήρισάν με μυκτηρισμὸν, ἔῤῥυξαν ἐπ' ἐμὲ τὰς ὀδόντας αὐτῶν· *They tempted me, they extremely mocked me, they gnashed their teeth upon me:*)—their cruel and contemptuous usage of him; (*Dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me:*)—their abusive dealing with him, when he in his distress called for some refreshment; *They gave me gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink:*—their disposal of his garments upon his suffering; (*They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture:*)—his being deserted of his friends and followers, and thence destitute of all consolation; (*I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children;—I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none:*)—the sense of God's withholding his favour and help; (*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me?*)—his charitable disposition and demeanour toward his enemies and persecutors; (*But as for me, when they were sick, (when they did trouble me,* say the LXX.) *my clothing was sackloth: I humbled myself with fasting, and my prayer returned into my own bosom. I behaved myself as though it had been my friend or brother; I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.*) Which passages, and the like, how patly and punctually they do square to respective passages in the gospels, I need not to shew; we do, I presume, all of us well enough remember that both most doleful and comfortable history, to be able ourselves to make the application.

Ps. cix. 25. xxxv. 21, 16. Psal. xxii. 16, 17. Psal. lxix. 21. Psal. xxii. 18. Psal. lxix. 8, 20. Psal. xxii. 1. lxix. 17. Ἐν τῷ αὐτὰς παρενοχλεῖν μοι. Psal. xxxv. 13, 14.

But there farther are not only such oblique intimations, or significations of this matter, shrouded under the coverture of other persons and names; but very direct and im-

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mediate predictions concerning the Messiah's being to suffer, most clearly expressed: that whole famous chapter (the 53d)

Isa. liii.

of Isaiah doth most evidently and fully declare it, wherein the kind, manner, causes, ends, and consequences of his sufferings, together with his behaviour under them, are gra-

Ver. 2.

phically represented: his appearing meanness, (*He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him:*)—the disgrace, contempt,

Ver. 3.

repulses, and rejection he underwent, (*He is despised and rejected of men—we hid our faces from him; he was de-*

Ver. 3, 4.

spised, and we esteemed him not:)—His afflicted state, (*He is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; we did esteem him stricken; smitten of God, and afflicted:*)—the bit-

Ver. 4, 5.

ter and painful manner of his affliction, (He *was stricken;* he *bare stripes;* he *was wounded and bruised:*)—his be-

Ver. 8, 12.

ing accused, adjudged, and condemned as a malefactor, (*He was taken from prison and from judgment—he was numbered among the transgressors:*)—his death consequent, (*He poured out his soul unto death; he was cut out of the land of the living:*)—the design and end of his sufferings; they were appointed and inflicted by divine Providence for our sake, and in our stead; for the expiation of our sins, and our

Ver. 10, 5, 4, 8, 6, 12.

salvation; (*It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin—he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed—surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows—for the transgression of my people he was stricken—the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all:*)—his sustaining all this with a willing,

Ver. 7.

quiet, humble patience, and perfect meekness, (*He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her*

Ver. 12.

shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth:)—his charitable praying for his persecutors, and designing their welfare, (*He made intercession for the transgressors:*)—the blessed consequences and happy success of his sufferings, in the conversion and justification of men; in performing God's will and work;

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in being satisfied, rewarded, and exalted himself, (*He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many:—I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong:*) which passages, as they do most exactly suit unto Jesus, and might in a sort constitute a true historical narration of what he did endure, together with the doctrines delivered in the Gospel concerning the intents and effects of his sufferings, so that they did, according to the intention of the divine Spirit, relate to the Messias, may from several considerations be made apparent; the context and coherence of all this passage with the matters precedent and subsequent, the which plainly do respect the Messias, and his times, do argue it: *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!* and, *Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, &c.* are passages immediately going before; to which this chapter is knit in way of continuation; and immediately after it doth follow, *Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear, &c.* being a no less perspicuous than elegant description of the Church, enlarged by accession of the Gentiles, which was to be brought to pass by the Messias. The general scope of this whole prophecy enforceth the same conclusion; and the incongruity of this particular prediction to any other person imaginable beside the Messias doth farther evince it: so high are the things ascribed to the suffering person; as that he should *bear the sins of all God's people, and heal them*; that he should *by his knowledge justify many*, (or the multitude;) that *the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand* to these grand purposes; that God would *divide him a portion with the great, and that he should divide the spoil with the strong:* the magnificency and importance of which sayings (rightly understood and weighed) do well agree to the Messias, but not to any other person, or simple man: whence if the ancient Jews had reason to believe a Messias was to come, (as they with general consent did suppose they had,) they

Isa. liii. 10, 11, 12.

Isa. lii. 7, 13.

Isa. liv. 1, &c.

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had as much reason to apply this place, as any other, to him, and thence to acknowledge that he was designed to be an eminent sufferer. And indeed divers of the ancient Targumists and most learned Rabbins did expound this place of the one Messias, which was to come; as the *Pugio fidei*, and other learned writers, do by several express testimonies declare. This place also discovereth the vanity of that figment, devised by some later Jews; who, to evade it, and to oppose Jesus, have affirmed there was to be a double Messias; one, who should be much afflicted; another, who should greatly prosper: since we may observe, that here both great afflictions and glorious performances concurrently are ascribed to the same person.

The same things are by parts also clearly foretold in other places of this Prophet, and in other prophetical Scriptures; by Isaiah again in the chapter immediately preceding, *Behold*, saith God there, *my servant shall deal prudently; he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high:* there is God's servant, (he, who in way of excellency is such, that is, in the style of this Prophet, the Messias) in his real glorious capacity. It followeth concerning his external appearance, *His visage was so marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men.* And again, in the 49th chapter; *Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy one, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship.* What can be more express and clear, than that it is signified here, that the Messias, who should subject the world, with its sovereign powers, to the acknowledgment and veneration of himself, was to be despised by men, to be detested by the Jewish people, to appear in a servile and base condition? The same Prophet doth again, in the 50th chapter, bring him in speaking thus: *I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.* His offending the Jews, so as thereby to aggravate their sins, and accelerate their punishments, is also thus expressed by the same Prophet: *And he shall be for a sanc-*

Isa lii. 13, 14.

Isa. xlix. 7.

Isa. l. 6.

Isa. viii. 14. (Psal. ii. 2.)

tuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. SERM. LXXVI

The Prophet Zechariah doth also in several places very roundly express his sufferings, his low condition in those words; *Behold thy King cometh unto thee; lowly, and riding upon an ass;* (that is, *pauper*, mean and sorry to appearance.) His manner of death in those words: *Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.* And again; *I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn, &c.* The Prophet Daniel also in that place, from which probably the name Messias was taken, and which most expressly mentioneth him, saith, that *after sixty-two weeks the Messias shall be cut off, but not for himself.* Now from all these passages of Scripture (beside divers others to the same purpose, observable by those, whose industry is assisted by divine illumination) we may well conclude with our Lord, Ὅτι οὕτω γέγραπται, καὶ οὕτως ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν Χριστόν· *That thus it was written, and thus* (according to the Prophet's foreshewing) *it was to happen, that the Christ should suffer;* suffer in a life of penury and disgrace, in a death of sorrow and shame.

Zech. ix. 9. Zech. xiii. 7. Zech. xii. 10. Dan. ix. 26. Luke xxiv. 46.

That it was to fall out thus, might also be well inferred by reasons grounded upon the qualities of the Messiah's person, and upon the nature of his performances, such as they are described in prophetical Scripture: he was to be really, and plainly to appear, a person of most admirable virtue and goodness; but never (as even Pagan philosophers have observed) was, or can there be any such without undergoing the trial of great affliction. He was to be an universal pattern to men of all sorts (especially to the greatest part of men, that is, to the poor and afflicted) of *all rightcousness;* to exemplify particularly the most difficult pieces of duty; (*humility, patience, meekness, charity, self-denial, entire resignation* to God's will:) this

Plato, Seneca, &c.

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he should not have had opportunity or advantage of doing, should he have been high, wealthy, splendid, and prosperous in secular matters: he was to exercise great pity and sympathy toward all mankind; toward the doing which it was requisite that he should himself taste and feel the inconveniences, troubles, pains, and sorrows incident to us. He was to advance the repute of spiritual goods and eternal blessings, depressing the value of these corporeal and temporal things, which men do so fondly admire and dote on: the most compendious and effectual way of doing which was by an exemplary neglect or rejection of worldly glories and enjoyments; refusing the honours, profits, and pleasures here, adjoined to a high state. He was by the most kindly, gentle, and peaceable means to erect a spiritual kingdom; by pure force of reason to subdue the hearts and consciences of men to the love and obedience of God; by wise instructions to raise in us the hopes of future recompenses in heaven; to the accomplishment of which purposes temporal glory (working on the carnal apprehensions and affections of men) had rather been prejudicial than conducible. He was to accomplish and manage his great designs by means supernatural and divine, the which would surely become more conspicuous by the visible meanness and impotency of his state. He was also most highly to merit from God, for himself, and for us; (to merit God's high approbation of what he did, God's favour and grace to us;) this he could not perform so well, as by willingly enduring, for God's sake, and in our behalf, the most hard and grievous things. He was, in fine, designed *perfectly to save us*, and consequently to appease God's wrath, to satisfy divine justice, to expiate our sins; whereto it was requisite, that he should undergo what we had deserved, being punished and afflicted for us.

Vide Theodoti Orat. in Eph. 1. Concil. p. 997.

Now that Jesus our Lord did most thoroughly correspond to whatever is in this kind declared by the Prophets concerning the Messias, we need not, by minutely relating the known history of his life and death, make out any farther, since the whole matter is palpably notorious, and

no adversary can deny it: I shall therefore conclude, that it is a clear and certain truth, which St. Peter in our text affirmeth, that *those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.* SERM. LXXVI.

Now, *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.* Amen. Rev. i. 5, 6.

Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen. Rev. v. 13.

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A WHIT-SUNDAY SERMON OF THE GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Acts ii. 38.

——And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

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Esth. ix. Deut. xvi.

Among the divers reasonable grounds and ends of the observing festival solemnities, (such as are comforting the poor by hospitable relief, refreshing the weary labourer by cessation from ordinary toil, maintaining good-will among neighbours by cheerful and free conversation, quickening our spirits and raising our fancies by extraordinary representations and divertisements, infusing and preserving good humour in people[a]; such as are also the decent conspiring in public expressions of special reverence to God, withdrawing our minds from secular cares, and engaging them to spiritual meditations,) the two principal designs of them seem to be these.

1. The affording occasion (or rather imposing a constraint upon us) with a competent frequency to attend unto, to consider upon, to instruct ourselves and others in the mysterious doctrines and institutions of our religion.

2. The engaging us seasonably to practise that great

[a] Θεοὶ δὲ οἰκτείραντες τὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπίπονον φῦλος, ἀναπαύλας τε αὐτοῖς τῶν πόνων ἐτάξαντο, τὰς τῶν ἑορτῶν ἀμοιβὰς τοῖς θεοῖς. *Plato* 2. *de Leg.*

Legum conditores festos instituerunt dies, ut ad hilaritatem homines publice cogerentur, tanquam necessarium laboribus interponentes temperamentum. *Sen. de tranq. an.* 15.

duty of thankfully remembering and praising God for those eminent mercies and favours, which by his great grace and goodness have been vouchsafed to us. SERM. LXXVII.

For these purposes chiefly did God himself appoint the Jewish festivals; for instance, the Passover, the reason of which being instituted is thus expressed; *that thou mayest remember the day, when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt, all the days of thy life:* which words imply that the observation of that solemnity did serve to preserve the memory, yea the continual remembrance of that so notable a blessing, which otherwise might have been totally forgotten, or seldom considered; the same did also suggest occasion of inquiry concerning the reasons of its appointment, procuring consequently needful information in that material point of their religion; as doth appear by those words of God, *And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover*—. Deut. xvi. 3. Exod. xii. 26, 27.

In compliance with which prudent designs, the Christian Church, from her first infancy, hath embraced the opportunity of recommending to her children the observation of her chief holy festivals, continuing the time, and retaining the name, although changing or improving the matter and reason of those ancient ones; the divine Providence concurring to further such proceeding, by so ordering the events of things, that the seasons of dispensing the evangelical blessings should fall in with those, wherein the legal benefits most resembling and representing them were commemorated; that so there might be as well a happy coincidence of time, as correspondence in matter between the ancient and new solemnities: whence as the exhibition of evangelical doctrines and mysteries did meet with minds more suitably prepared to entertain them, and as less innovation from former usuage did appear, (a thing observable to be respected in most, or all the positive institutions of our religion,) so withal Christians were engaged, while they considered the fresh greater mercies by God vouchsafed Aug. de Civ. Dei. x. 4.

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to them, to reflect also upon the favours, from the same stock of goodness, indulged by him to his ancient people; that as those should chiefly be remembered, so these should not wholly be forgotten: thus did God dispose, that our Saviour should then suffer, when the Paschal Lamb was to be offered; or that the redemption of the world from sin and misery should then be celebrated by us, when the deliverance from the Egyptian slavery was commemorated by them: and so (that we may approach to our purpose) at the time of Pentecost, when the Jews were obliged to *rejoice before the Lord*, rendering thanks unto him for the harvest newly gathered in, and the earth's good fruits (the main supports and comforts of this life) were by God's blessing bestowed on them, then did God bountifully impart the first-fruits of his Holy Spirit, the food of our souls and refreshment of our hearts; then did he cause his labourers to put their sickle into the spiritual harvest; converting souls, and gathering them as mature fruits into the garners of the Church.

Deut. xvi.

At the very season also (which is remarkable) that the Law was delivered to the Jews, and the ancient covenant established which did happen at Pentecost, as may be probably collected from the text, and is commonly supposed by the Jewish Doctors, who therefore called this feast שמחה תורת, *the joy* (or joyful feast) *of the Law*, in signification of their joy, using then to crown their heads with garlands, and strew their houses with green herbs: at that very time was the Christian law most signally promulged, and the new covenant's ratification most solemnly declared by the miraculous effusion of the divine Spirit.

Exod. xix. 1.

The benefit therefore and blessing, which at this time we are bound especially to consider and commemorate [b], is in effect the publication and establishment of the covenant evangelical, the foundation of all our hopes, and all

[b] Πεντηκοστὴν ἑορτάζομεν, καὶ πνεύματος ἐπιδημίαν, καὶ προθεσμίαν ἐπαγγελίας, καὶ ἐλπίδος συμπλήρωσιν, &c. *Naz. Orat.* 44.

our claims to happiness; but more immediately and directly the donation of the Holy Spirit to the Christian Church, and to all its members; for the better understanding and more truly valuing of which most excellent benefit, let us briefly declare the nature and design thereof. SERM. LXXVII.

Almighty God, seeing the generality of mankind alienated from himself by gross ignorance of its duty toward him, and by habitual inclinations to violate his holy laws, (originally implanted by him in our nature, or anciently revealed to our first parents,) immersed in error, enslaved to vice, and obnoxious to the woful consequences of them, severe punishment and extreme misery; was pleased in his immense goodness and pity to design its rescue from that sad condition; and, in pursuance of that gracious design, did resolve upon expedients the most admirable and most efficacious that could be: for to redeem men from the tyranny of sin and hell, to reconcile them to himself, to recover them into a happy state, he sent his own only beloved Son out of his bosom into this world, clothed with our nature; by him, as by a Plenipotentiary Commissioner from himself, inviting all men to return unto him; declaring himself, by the meritorious obedience, the expiatory passion, the effectual intercession of his dear Son, abundantly satisfied for, and ready to grant a full pardon of, all offences committed against him in their state of error and estrangement; to admit them into a state of present indemnity and peace, yea to settle them in perpetual alliance and friendship with himself, upon most fair and gentle terms; namely, that, renouncing their erroneous principles, and reforming their vicious courses of life, they cheerfully would embrace his merciful overtures, and thereafter conform their lives to his righteous laws; the which, together with all his good intentions concerning them, he, by the same blessed agent, clearly discovered to them; fully by him instructing them in their duty, and strongly encouraging them to the performance thereof by the promise of most bountiful rewards; his certain love and favour attended with endless joy and

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bliss; thus *did*, as St. Paul expresseth it, *the saving grace of God appear unto all men, teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, expecting that blessed hope.*

Tit. ii. 11, 12.

But to render this wonderfully gracious design successful, in a way of wisdom and reasonable proceeding accommodated to the capacities of human nature, it was requisite, that there should be provided convincing arguments to persuade men of the truth and reality of these things, (that indeed such an extraordinary agent, with such a message, was come from heaven,) effectual means of admonishing and exciting men to a heedful advertency toward them, competent motives to a cordial acceptance of them; a power also sufficient, notwithstanding their natural impotency and instability, to continue them in the belief, to uphold them in the practice of the duties prescribed, in the performance of the conditions required.

For if it were not very credible, that God had truly those intentions toward us, or if we did not much regard the overture of them, or if we did not conceive the business highly to concern us; or if, resolving to comply with the Gospel, we yet were unable to discharge the conditions thereof, the design would totally be frustrated, and of itself come to nothing. To prevent which disappointment of his merciful intentions, Almighty God did abundantly provide, in a manner and measure suitable to the glorious importance of them; for to the ministry of his eternal wisdom, he adjoined the efficacy of his eternal love, and blessed Spirit; the which not only conducted God our Saviour into his fleshly tabernacle, and with *unmeasurable communications* of himself did continually reside within him, but also did attend him in the conspicuous performance of numberless miraculous works, implying divine power and goodness, as exceeding not only any natural, but all created power, (such as were by mere word and will healing the sick and restoring the maimed, ejecting evil spirits, discerning the secret thoughts of men, foretelling contingent events, reviving the dead, raising

John iii. 34.

himself from the grave;) which works, some expressly, others by parity of reason, are ascribed to the Holy Spirit; for, *If*, saith our Lord, *I by the Spirit of God cast out devils*—and, *God*, saith St. Peter, *anointed him with the Holy Ghost, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil*: and, *Who*, saith St. Paul, *was declared to be the Son of God, according to the Holy Spirit, by the resurrection from the dead*: so did God afford the most evident attestation that could be to the truth of our Saviour's quality, commission, and doctrine; by so clear and rousing significations did God invite men to take notice of these things. SERM. LXXVII. Matt. xii. 28. Acts x. 38. Rom. i. 4.

But farther to induce them heartily to comply with these gracious overtures, and to render them thoroughly available to the purpose designed, the salvation of men, according to the terms prescribed of faith in God, and obedience to his commandments, God was pleased farther to resolve, and he faithfully did promise, that he would impart the same blessed Spirit, as a continual guide and assistant to all those, who seriously would entertain those tenders of mercy, sincerely resolving the performance of the conditions.

Now although the natural and ordinary manner of this divine Spirit's operation (like that of all spirits and more subtile substances) is not by violent and sensible impressions[c], but rather in way of imperceptible penetration, or gentle insinuating of itself into the subject upon which it worketh, hardly discovering itself otherwise than by the notable effects resulting from it; and although likewise the proper and principal effects thereof, according to divine designation, do relate to the furthering our performance of the said conditions requisite toward our salvation, that is, to the cherishing our faith and quickening our obedience; disposing men to perform virtuous actions, rather than to achieve wondrous exploits; yet more fully to satisfy the doubtful, to convince the incredulous (to

[c] Καὶ γὰρ σὺ θείας ἀπέλαυσας χάριτος βαπτιζόμενος, καὶ πνεύματος μετέσχες, εἰ καὶ μὴ πρὸς τὸ σημεῖα ποιεῖν, ἀλλ' ὅσον ἀρκεῖ πρὸς τὸ πολιτείαν ὀρθὴν, καὶ ἠκριβωμένην λαβεῖν. *Chrys. Tom.* vi. *Orat.* 12. *ad Demet.*

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confound the obstinate) world about the truth of his intentions, more illustriously to manifest the completion of his promise, more surely to fortify the faithful against the scandals and temptations, which their profession would incur [d], God was pleased after our Lord's ascension, and when the apostolical promulgation of the Christian doctrine did commence, to dispense both to the teachers and the disciples thereof more liberal communications of that Holy Spirit, attended with notorious, strange, and wonderful effects, apt to provoke the admiration of men, to persuade their judgments, to prevail upon their affections, to produce within them strong desires of partaking so high a privilege and excellent endowment.

Acts ii. 12. 43. iv. 14. ix. 11, 16. 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

The memorial, therefore, of that most gracious and glorious dispensation, the Christian Church wisely and piously hath continually preserved, obliging us at this time peculiarly to bless God for that incomparable and inestimable gift, conferred then most visibly upon the Church, and still really bestowed upon every particular member, duly incorporated thereinto.

I say bestowed upon every particular member of the Church; for the evangelical covenant doth extend to every Christian; and a principal ingredient thereof is the collation of this Spirit: which is the *finger of God*, whereby (according to the Prophet Jeremiah's description of that covenant) *God's law is put into their inward parts, and written in their hearts; inscribed*, as St. Paul allusively speaketh, *not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart*; not only, as the Jewish law represented, from without to the senses, but impressed within upon the mind and affections; whence God's Spirit is called the *Spirit of promise*, the donation thereof being the peculiar promise of the Gospel; and the end of our Saviour's undertaking is by St. Paul declared, *that we might receive the promise of the Spirit by faith*, that is, by embracing Christianity might

Luke xi. 20. Jer. xxxi. 33. 2 Cor. iii. 3. Heb. viii. 10. Ezek. xi. 19. John vi. 45. Πνεῦμα τῆς ἐπαγγελίας. Eph. i. 13. Gal. iii. 14.

[d] Τῶν γὰρ χαρισμάτων τῶν πνευματικῶν τὰ μὲν ἀόρατά ἐστιν καὶ πίστει καταλαμβάνεται μόνῃ, τὰ δὲ καὶ αἰσθητὸν ἐνδείκνυται σημεῖον πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἀπίστων πληροφορίαν. *Chrys. Tom.* v. *Orat.* 88.

partake thereof, according to God's promise; and the apostolical ministry or exhibition of Gospel is styled *the ministration of the Spirit*; and *tasting of the heavenly gift, and participation of the Holy Ghost*, is part of a Christian's character; and the susception of Christianity is thus described by St. Paul; *But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath chosen you from the beginning to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:* and our Saviour instructed Nicodemus, that *no man can enter into the kingdom of God* (that is, become a Christian, or subject to God's spiritual kingdom) *without being regenerated by water, and by the Spirit*, that is, without baptism, and the spiritual grace attending it; according as St. Peter doth in the words adjoining to our text imply, that the reception of the Holy Spirit is annexed to holy baptism; *Repent*, saith he, *and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise* (that great promise of the Holy Ghost) *is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call;* that is, the Holy Spirit is promised to all, how far soever distant in place or time, whoever shall be invited unto, and shall embrace the Christian profession. St. John also maketh it to be the distinctive mark of those, in whom Christ abideth, and who dwell in Christ, that is, of all true Christians, to have this Spirit; *Hereby*, saith he, *we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us*, and, *Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.* And St. Paul denieth him to be a good Christian who is destitute thereof; *Now*, saith he, *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his:* and, *Know ye not*, saith he to the Corinthians, *that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* that is, Do ye not understand this to be a common privilege of all Christians, such as ye profess yourselves to be? And the conversion of men to Christianity he thus expresseth; *After the kindness and love of God our Saviour*

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Διακονία τοῦ πνεύματος. 2 Cor. iii. 8. Heb. vi. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 13. John iii. 5. Acts ii. 38, 39. 1 John iii. 24. 1 John iv. 13. Rom. viii. 9. 1 Cor. iii. 16. Tit. iii. 4, 5.

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toward man appeared; not by any righteous works which we had done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the laver of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. And all pious dispositions qualifying us for entrance into heaven and happiness (faith, charity, and devotion, every grace, every virtue) are represented to be *fruits of the Holy Spirit:* and the union of all Christians into one body, the catholic society of truly faithful people, doth, according to St. Paul, result from this one Spirit, as a common soul animating and actuating them: *For*, saith he, *by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and have all been made to drink of one Spirit.*

Gal. v. 22. Eph. v. 9. Rom. iv. 5.

1 Cor. xii. 13.

In fine, whatever some few persons, or some petty sects (as the Pelagians of old, the Socinians now) may have deemed, it hath been the doctrine constantly, and with very general consent delivered in the Catholic Church, that to all persons by the holy mystery of baptism duly initiated to Christianity, or admitted into the communion of Christ's body, the grace of God's Holy Spirit certainly is bestowed, enabling them to perform the conditions of piety and virtue then undertaken by them; enlightening their minds, rectifying their wills, purifying their affections, directing and assisting them in their practice; the which holy gift (if not abused, ill-treated, driven away, or quenched by their ill behaviour) will perpetually be continued, improved, and increased to them: it is therefore by Tertullian (in his Prescriptions against Heretics) reckoned as part of that fundamental rule, which was grounded upon the general tradition and consent of the Christian Church, that *Christ had sent the virtue of the Holy Ghost in his room, which doth act believers* [e]; to which that article doth answer of the Apostolical Creed, in which we profess to *believe the Holy Ghost;* meaning, I suppose, thereby not only the bare existence of the Holy Ghost, but also its gracious communication and energy.

[e] *Tert. de Præsc.* 13—— misisse vicariam vim Spiritus Sancti, qui credentes agat.

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Since therefore the collation of this eminent gift and favour so nearly doth concern us all; seeing it is our present duty more especially to praise and bless God for it; seeing also we are wont to commensurate our gratitude to our estimation of the benefit, unto which it relateth: let us a little consider the worth and excellency of this divine gift conferred on us.

That it is transcendently valuable we may in general hence collect, that even in our Lord's esteem it did not only countervail, but in a manner surmount the benefit of his presence; Συμφέρει, *It is,* said he, *expedient* (or profitable) *for you that I go away;* God having designed, that my absence shall be supplied by the Comforter's more beneficial presence: and wonderfully beneficial surely must that presence be, which could not only compensate, but render advantageous the loss of that most benign and sweet conversation, that tender and watchful inspection, that wholesome and powerful advice, that clear and lively pattern of all goodness shining forth in our Saviour's life upon his Disciples. Could there be a more indulgent Master, a more discreet Guide, a more delightful Companion, a more faithful Friend, a mightier Protector, a surer Assistant, a sweeter Comforter than he? Yes, it seemeth that our Saviour did apprehend, that upon some accounts those benefits with greater advantage might accrue to them by the gift of his Spirit, than by his own immediate presence; that it by internal operation could more clearly inform the mind, more strongly incline the will, more vigorously affect the heart, than any exterior word or example could do: neither could our Saviour, according to the condition of his humanity, limited to particularities of time and place, so perfectly correspond to the various exigencies of mankind, as that omnipotent Spirit, intimately present to, uniformly diffused through all things: Him therefore did our Saviour leave the guardian of his otherwise orphan Disciples; him did he substitute to undergo the care and tuition of them, to conduct them in the right way, to preserve them from dangers, to comfort them in distresses, to manage all their concernments, to

John xvi. 7.

Οὐκ ἀφήσω ὑμᾶς ὀρφανούς. John xiv. 18.

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be their counsellor, monitor, advocate, and patron; by him he meant fully to make good his word, *that he would be with them till the end of this world*[f].

But more distinctly to survey the many benefits and advantages proceeding from this excellent gift unto us, we may observe, that on it the foundation, the improvement, the completion of all our good and happiness do depend; that to the Holy Spirit in truth and justice are to be ascribed, 1. our better state and being; 2. our spiritual powers and abilities; 3. our good and acceptable performances; whatever we are, whatever we can do, whatever we actually do perform as Christians.

1. We owe to the Holy Spirit our spiritual state and being; our spiritual life, our freedom, our honourable condition.

Πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν. 1 Cor. xv. 45. John vi. 63. Eph. ii. 1,5. 1 Pet. i. 23.

It is by virtue of this *quickening Spirit*, that from death and corruption we are raised to an immortal and indefectible state of life; that, as St. Paul saith, we, that *were dead in trespasses and sins, are quickened together with Christ;* we by this *incorruptible seed are born again;* not, as formerly, to a life of vanity and misery, or to the enjoyment of a few transitory delights, tempered with many vexatious inconveniences, pains, and troubles; but to sure capacities of most solid and durable contentments, *to a living hope of an incorruptible inheritance reserved in heaven for us.*

1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

It is thereby we are free men, enjoying a true and perfect liberty; being enfranchised from divers intolerable slaveries, to which we naturally are subjected, and from which otherwise we could not be exempted; from the dominion of a rigorous law[g], which prescribeth hard duties, but doth not afford strength to perform them; apt to condemn us, but not able to convert us; from the clamorous accusations of a guilty conscience, with anxious fears of punishment, that *spirit of bondage unto fear*, of which St. Paul speaketh; from the tyranny of a most crafty, spite-

Gal. iv. 24.

Rom. viii. 15.

[f] Ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος. Matt. xxviii. 20.

[g] Lex os omnium potuit obstruere, non potuit mentem convertere. *Ambr.*

ful, and cruel enemy, that wicked one who did *captivate us at his pleasure*, and detained us under his power; from the no less unjust, no less mischievous domination of our own flesh, or natural concupiscence, imposing grievous tasks and destructive necessities upon us; *It is*, saith St. Paul, *the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which setteth us, free from these laws of sin and of death;* so that, *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.* SERM. LXXVII. 2 Tim. ii. 26. Eph. ii. 2. Rom. viii. 2. 2 Cor. iii. 17.

From such base thraldoms we thereby are redeemed, and not only so, but are advanced to an honourable condition, are ennobled with illustrious relations, are entitled to glorious privileges: all the benefits and immunities contained in the charter of the new Jerusalem, all the advantages and privileges appropriated to God's court and family thereby appertain unto us; for *we have*, saith St Paul, *access by one Spirit unto the Father*, and are thence *no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God:* by this *holy unction* we are consecrated *kings and priests unto God;* by participation of this *immortal seed* we are engrafted into alliance with the heavenly king, become children of God, brethren of Christ, heirs of Paradise, (an infinitely better Paradise than that from which we formerly were excluded;) for this is that πνεῦμα υἱοθεσίας, that Spirit which constituteth us the sons of God, qualifying us to be so by dispositions resembling God, and filial affections toward him; certifying us that we are so, and causing us by a free instinct *to cry, Abba, Father*, running into his bosom of love, and flying under the wings of his mercy in all our needs and distresses; whence *as many as are led by the Spirit, they*, saith St. Paul, *are the Sons of God;* and, *the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God;* yea, which may seem yet a farther pitch of dignity, we, by intervention of this Spirit, are united and incorporated into Christ himself, being made living members of his body, partaking a common life and sense with him; by it we are compacted into the same spiritual edifice, dedicated to the worship and inhabitation of God; our bodies and souls are made temples of his divinity, thrones Eph. ii. 18, 19. Rev. i. 6. 1 Pet. ii. 9. Rom. viii. 15. John i. 13. Gal. iv. 6. Rom. viii. 14. Rom. viii. 16.

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of his majesty, orbs of his celestial light, paradises of his blissful presence; for, *In whom*, saith St. Paul, *ye are built together for an inhabitation of God through the Spirit;* and, *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

Eph. ii. 22. 1 Cor. iii. 16.

By the Holy Spirit we are instated in these unconceivably glorious privileges, and by it only we are assured of them, to our comfort; the gift of it, as it is a great part of them, and the chief cause, so it is a sure confirmation and pledge; *Ye*, saith St. Paul, *were sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance;* and, *It is God who did establish us with you in Christ, and anointed us, and also sealed us, and gave the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts:* all which phrases do import the same thing, that is, a comfortable assurance concerning the reality of the benefits by divine grace exhibited and promised to us.

Eph. i. 13. Rom. viii. 9, 11. 2 Cor. i. 21, 22.

2. Neither only relatively and extrinsically is our state bettered and exalted from death to life, from slavery to freedom, from baseness to dignity; but ourselves answerably are changed and amended by the same Holy Spirit, with a real and intrinsical alteration, transforming us into other things, much different from what we were in our former natural state; by that *renovation of the Holy Ghost*, of which St. Paul speaketh, we are, saith he, *renewed in the spirit of our mind;* so that not only the decayed frame of our soul is thereby repaired and reformed, but its powers are much improved and enlarged; we are thence endued with new and better faculties, as it were; with quicker apprehensions, with sincerer judgments, with righter inclinations, with nobler passions, than we had before, yea, than we could have had in our original state; so that in the language of Holy Scripture we thence become *new men, and new creatures, created according to God in righteousness and true holiness;* according to God, that is, in conformity to the divine perfections of rectitude in mind and will, so as to resemble God in a higher degree, and more worthy respects, than formerly. Our father Adam was made εἰς ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, a creature endued

2 Cor. v. 17. Tit. iii. 5. Eph. iv. 23. Eph. iv. 24. 2 Cor. v. 17. Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 23, ii. 10. Col. iii. 10. 1 Cor. xv. 45.

with life and sense, furnished with powers and appetites disposing to acquire, preserve, and enjoy the conveniences agreeable to that frame; and we naturally are ψυχικοὶ ἄνθρωποι, *animal men;* such as naturally do apprehend, do affect, do pursue things concerning this present life; the pleasures of sense, and the satisfactions of fancy; freedom from want and pain, security from danger and disturbance, together with the means we suppose conducible to those, wealth, honour, and power; these are those *desires of the flesh and of the mind*, the things which according to our natural temper and frame we like and approve; which most men therefore do highly value, passionately love, and earnestly seek: nor doth nature only incline us to a complacence in these things, but customary fruition greatly endeareth them to us; so that we continually improve our acquaintance, and contract a firmer alliance with them; but spiritual and divine things *(the things of the Spirit of God* [h], as St. Paul calleth them) we cannot *receive;* that is, simply of ourselves, without aid of another interior principle, we have no capacity to apprehend them, no disposition to entertain them, no strength to pursue them; they, as the Apostle saith, *are foolishness to us*, that is, incongruous to our prejudicate notions, and insipid to our corrupt palates.

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1 Cor. ii. 14.

Θελήματα σαρκὸς καὶ τῶν διανοιῶν. Eph. ii. 3.

Δέχεσθαι.

Such doctrines as these; that our felicity consisteth not in affluence of temporal enjoyments, but in dispositions of soul crossing our humours, curbing our appetites, and quelling our passions; in conformity of practice to rules distasteful to our sense; in the love and favour of an invisible Being; in reversion of an estate not to be possessed until after our death in another world; that none of these present things do well deserve our serious regard, affection, or care, and that it is blameable to be solicitous about them; that naked goodness (how low, weak, and poor soever) is to be chosen before all the specious pomps and glories of this world; that the secret testimony of conscience is to be preferred before all the approbation and ap-

[h] Τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ Θεοῦ. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

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plause of men; that the hope of future joy should oversway the desire of present most certain and sensible delights; that the loss of all things may sometime be deemed our greatest gain, being contemned our highest honour, enduring afflictions our most desirable condition, death our surest welfare, a cross preferable to a crown; that accordingly it is often advantageous and expedient for us, and a duty incumbent on us, willingly to discard our dearest contents of life, to sacrifice our most valued interest, to forsake our nearest relations, to refuse what we most affect, to undertake what we most distaste, to undergo without reluctancy or regret the most bitter accidents that can befall us; that we must (to use the holy style) *hate our own souls, deny ourselves, and take up our cross, quit houses and lands, desert kindred and friends;* ἀποτάσσεσθαι πᾶσι τοῖς ἑαυτῆ ὑπάρχουσι *to renounce*, or bid farewell to, *all that he hath*, or owneth, *cut off our right hands, and pluck out our right eyes; circumcise our hearts, mortify our members; crucify our flesh, with its affections and lusts; be crucified to the world;* to *account all* worldly *things damage*, dross, and *dung*, in comparison to spiritual goods: that we must so far remit and restrain our self-love, as to love all men, not excluding our greatest enemies, as ourselves; so as not only to part freely with our particular accommodations, but upon occasion, in imitation of our Saviour, to *lay down our lives for them;* so as not only to comport with their infirmities, but to requite their extremest injuries with good-will and good turns; so as to do good to all men, to return no evil to any; *to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, to pray for them which despitefully use us, and persecute us.*

John xii. 25. Luke ix. 23. xiv. 26, 33. Matt. xvi. 24. v. 29. Col. iii. 5. Gal. v. 24. vi. 14. Rom. vi. 6. Phil. iii. 7, 8. Matt. v. 44.

John vi. 60. These and such like dictates of the Spirit are hard and harsh sayings, absurd to our natural conceit, and abominable to our carnal humour; we cannot readily swallow them, we cannot easily digest them; in respect to them we as mere men are ἐχθροὶ τῇ διανοίᾳ, *enemies in our mind*, or reason; our discourse presently doth contradict and oppose them; our reason is shut up, and barred with various appetites, humours, and passions against such truths; nor

Col. i. 21.

can we admit them into our hearts, except God by his Spirit do *set open our mind*, and work a free passage for them into us; it is *he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness*, who must, as St. Paul speaketh, *illustrate our hearts with the knowledge* of these things; an *unction from the Holy One*, clearing our eyes, softening our hearts, healing our distempered faculties, must, as St. John informeth us, *teach* and persuade us this sort of truths: a hearty faith of these seemingly incredible propositions must indeed be, as St. Paul calleth it, *the gift of God*, proceeding from that *Spirit of faith*, whereof the same Apostle speaketh; such faith is not, as St. Basil saith, *engendered by geometrical necessities, but by the effectual operations of the Holy Ghost*[i]: *Flesh and blood will not reveal unto us, nor can any man* with clear confidence *say, that Jesus* (the author, master, and exemplifier of these doctrines) *is the Lord*, (the Messias, the infallible Prophet, the universal Lawgiver, the Son of the living God,) *but by the Holy Ghost: Every spirit, which* sincerely *confesseth him to be the Christ*, who hath enjoined these precepts, we may with St. John safely conclude to *be of God;* for of ourselves *we are not sufficient*, as the Apostle saith, λογίζεσθαί τι, *to reason out*, or collect, any of these things; we never of our own accord, without divine attraction, should *come unto Christ*, that is, should effectually consent unto and embrace his institution, consisting of such unplausible propositions and precepts: hardly would his own disciples, who had so long enjoyed the light of his instruction and conversation, have admitted it, if he had not granted to them that *Spirit of truth*, whose work it was ὁδηγεῖν, to lead them in this unknown and uncouth way, ἀναγγέλλειν, to tell them again and again, that is, to instil and inculcate these crabbed truths upon them, ὑπομιμνήσκειν, to admonish, excite, and urge them to the marking and minding them; hardly, I say, without the guidance of the Spirit, would our Lord's disciples have admitted divers evangelical truths,

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Διανοίγειν τὸν νοῦν. Luke xxiv. 45. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Acts xvi. 14. 1 John ii. 27. Eph. ii. 8. Phil. i. 29. 1 Cor. xii. 9. Πνεῦμα τῆς πίστεως. 2 Cor. iv. 13. Matt. xvi. 17. 1 Cor. xii. 3. 1 John iv. 2. 2 Cor. iii. 5. John vi. 44. John xvi. 13. John xiv. 26.

[i] Πίστις οὐκ ἐν γεωμετρικαῖς ἀνάγκαις, ἀλλ' ἡ τῆ πνεύματος ἐν ἐνεργείαις ἐγγινομένη. *Bas. in Ps.* cxv.

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as our Lord himself told them; *I have*, said he, *many things beside to say to you, but ye cannot as yet bear them: but when he, the Spirit of truth, shall come, he shall conduct you into all truth.*

John xvi. 12, 13.

As for the mighty sages of the world, the learned scribes, the subtle disputers, the deep politicians, the *wise men according to the flesh*, the men of most refined judgment, and improved reason in the world's eye, they were more ready to deride than to regard, to impugn than to admit these doctrines: to the *Greeks who sought widom*, the preaching of them did seem *foolishness*.

1 Cor. i. 20, &c.

It is true, some few sparks or flashes of this divine knowledge may possibly be driven out by rational consideration; philosophy may yield some twilight glimmerings thereof; common reason may dictate a faint consent unto, may produce a cold tendency after some of these things; but a clear perception, and a resolute persuasion of mind, that *full assurance of faith* [k], and *inflexible confession of hope* [l], which the Apostle to the Hebrews speaketh of; that *all riches of the full assurance of understanding*, that *abundant knowledge of the divine will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding* [m], with which St. Paul did pray that his Colossians might *be replenished*; these so perfect illustrations of the mind, so powerful convictions of the heart, do argue immediate influences from the fountain of life and wisdom, the divine Spirit. No external instruction could infuse, no interior discourse could excite them, could penetrate those opacities of ignorance, and dissipate those thick mists of prejudice, wherein nature and custom do involve us; could so thoroughly awaken the lethargic stupidity of our souls; could supple the refractory stiffness of our wills, could mollify the stony hardness of our hearts, could void our natural aversation to such things, and quell that φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς, *that carnal mind*, the which, St. Paul saith, *is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*; could depress those ὑψώματα,

Col. i. 9.

Rom. viii. 7.

2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

[k] Πληροφορία τῆς πίστεως. Heb. x. 22.

[l] Ὁμολογία τῆς ἐλπίδος ἀκλινής. Heb. x. 23.

[m] Πᾶς πλοῦτος τῆς πληροφορίας τῆς συνέσεως. Col. ii. 2.

those *lofty towers* of self-conceit, *reared against the knowledge of God*, and *demolish* those ὀχυρώματα, those bulwarks of self-will and perverse stomach opposed against the impressions of divine truth; and *captivate* πᾶν νόημα, *every conceit* and device of ours *to the obedience of Christ* and his discipline. Well, therefore, did St. Paul pray in behalf of his Ephesians that *God would bestow on them that spirit of wisdom and revelation in the acknowledgment of him, and that the eyes of their mind* (or reason) *might be enlightened, so as to know the hope of their calling;* that is, to understand and believe the doctrines of Christianity, which upon condition of obedience did promise felicity to them.

Eph. i. 17, 18. Τῆς διανοίας.

So is the light of spiritual knowledge, together with a temper of mind, disposing to receive it, communicated to us; but farther also by the same divine power and spirit are our vital heat and vigour, our active strength and courage imparted. For as mere men, we are not only blind to discern, dull to conceive, backward to undertake the necessary duties of virtue and piety; but we are also dead, heartless, and unwieldy, lame and impotent, indisposed and uncapable to perform them: though we should competently apprehend our duty, and our spirit thence should be *willing;* yet *our flesh*, or natural power, *is weak:* we may, as St. Paul instructeth us, in our judgment consent that *the Law is holy, just, and good;* and consequently *to will may be present to us;* that is, we may be desirous, and in some measure resolved to obey it; yea, we may *have some interior rational complacence therein;* and yet not have ability to act according to these dictates and desires; for *to will is present with me*, (saith he in the person of a man endued only with natural strength, abstracting from the subsidiary virtue and operation of the Divine Spirit,) *but to perform that which is good, I find not;* I perceive not any means or way of effecting it; knowledge therefore, and willingness to do good, doth not suffice; we need a prevalent force to stir and raise this unwieldy bulk, to overpoise our natural propensions, to subdue the reluctancies, and check the importunities of sense, to correct bad

Matt. xxvi. 41. Rom. vii. 12, 16. Σύμφημι τῷ νόμῳ ὅτι καλός. Rom. vii. 22. Συνήδομαι τῷ νόμῳ κατὰ τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον. Rom. vii. 18. Τὸ δὲ κατεργάζεσθαι τὸ καλὸν, οὐχ ὑρίσκω.

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nature, and reclaim from bad custom: the natural might and policy of our single reason, being very feeble and shallow, is not fitly matched to encounter that potent confederacy of enemies, which continually with open violence doth invade and assail us; or which by clandestine wiles doth watch to circumvent and supplant us. Is it easy for us not to dread the frowns, nor to be charmed by the flatteries; to slight both the hatred and favour; to abide the persecutions, and to avoid the allurements of this world; this wicked, violent, deceitful world, which is ever ready to deter from good, and entice us to evil?

1 Pet. ii. 11. Jam. iv. 1. Is it easy to restrain and repress those *fleshly lusts, which*, as St. Peter saith, *do war against our souls*, combating them with our own forces, using their own faculties and members as weapons against them? Is it easy to rescue

Rom. vii. 25. ourselves from that *other law in our members, that warreth against the law of our understanding, and captivateth us to the law of sin?* Is it a small matter to set upon, to grapple with, to knock down that gigantic Philistine, inordinate self-love, (the root of injustice, pride, envy, malice, ambition, and avarice within us,) which naturally is so tall and stout; which, if not checked in its progress, will daily grow in stature and strength? Is it a slight business to detect, to counterplot, to decline or defeat

Eph. vi. 11. Ἡμῖν ἡ πάλη. those μεθοδείαι, those *devices*, or *subtile trains*, and sleights of the temper; *to wrestle with principalities, with powers,*

Eph. vi. 12. *with the rulers of this darksome world, with the spiritualities of wickedness* surrounding us? May we not reasonably in comparison to these mighty Anakim be (as the children of

Num. xiii. 33. Israel anciently were) *in our own sight as grasshoppers*, quite despairing by our own strength to vanquish, to resist them?

In our spiritual conflict with such dangerous and dreadful adversaries, we do need an ἐπιχορηγία τοῦ πνεύματος, as

Phil. i. 19. St. Paul speaketh, that is *a large supply of the Spirit*, a collation of auxiliary forces, an habitual support derived from that invincible and infallible Spirit, which only is stronger and wiser than they; we need to be armed with

Luke xxiv. 49. (Isa. lix. 19.) that δύναμις ἐξ ὕψους, that *power from on high*, or heavenly

might, whereby the Apostles were enabled to fight their noble battles, and to achieve their glorious conquests, subduing the rebellious world, and baffling the powers of darkness; we need δυνάμει κραταιωθῆναι, *to be strengthened with might by Christ's Spirit in the inward man*, as St. Paul expresseth it; whereby, as he, we may πάντα ἰσχύειν, be *able to do all things*, or to accomplish the most difficult parts of our duty; without which *we can do nothing*, that is, cannot discharge the most easy things required of us; *all our sufficiency is of God;* it is he, who *out of his goodness doth effect in us both to will and to perform;* his Spirit *taking part with our infirmities*, and thereby giving us advantage over all opposition and difficulty. The chief reason why we *do not sin*, or persist in a course of disobedience to the laws of God, is, as St. John telleth us, *because the divine seed abideth in us*, that root of divine life, and vital activity implanted in us by the Holy Spirit; that *divine nature*, (as St. Peter styleth it,) that principle and spring of spiritual motion by him inserted in us; from which only seed or nature do sprout all heavenly graces and virtues [n].

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Eph. iii. 16. Col. i. 11. Phil. iv. 13. John xv. 5. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Phil. ii. 13. Τὸ πνεῦμα συναντιλαμβάνεται ταῖς ἀσθενείαις ἡμῶν— Rom. viii. 26. 1 John iii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 23. 2 Pet. i. 4. Θεία φύσις. Vis divinæ gratiæ, potentior utique natura. *Tertull.*

The principal and original virtue, charity, *(the root, the fountain, the mother of all goodness*, as St. Chrysostom calleth it [o],) even that is *shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given unto us*, as St. Paul telleth us; and the *fruit*, saith he, *of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth;* and, *love, peace, long-suffering, benignity, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance*, are by the same divine Apostle reckoned streams from the same source, fruits of the same rich and goodly stock: to it generally are attributed all purification of our hearts, mortification of our lusts, sanctification of our lives, and consequently salvation of our souls: *Ye*, saith St. Paul, *are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God;* and, *God hath chosen us from the beginning to salvation by sanctification of the Spirit, and*

Rom. v. 5. Eph. v. 9. Gal. v. 22. 1 Cor. vi. 11. 2 Thess. ii. 13.

[n] Οὐ γάρ ἐστιν ἁμαρτημάτων ἀπαλλαγῆναι ἄνευ τῆς τοῦ πνεύματος ἐνεργείας. *Chrys.*

[o] Ῥίζα, καὶ πηγὴ, καὶ μήτηρ ἁπάντων τῶν ἀγαθῶν. *Chrys.*

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belief of the truth; and, *Having*, saith St. Peter, *purified our souls in obedience to the truth, by the Spirit, unto charity unfeigned;* and, *If*, saith St. Paul again, *by the Spirit ye mortify the deeds of the flesh, ye shall live;* thus doth our spiritual being and state, together with our life and active powers, depend upon the Holy Spirit: and not only so; but,

1 Pet. i. 22. Rom. viii. 13.

3. The continued subsistence and preservation, the actual use and exercise of them, all our discreet conduct, all our good practice do rely upon him: it is true of our spiritual, no less than of our natural life. *If he doth avert his face, we are troubled; if he doth subtract his influence, we die, and return unto our dust:* upon all occasions we do need his direction, aid, and comfort; for *the way of man*, as the Prophet saith, *is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps: It is the Lord*, as the Psalmist saith, *that ordereth the steps of a good man, and upholdeth him with his hand.* We have all need to pray with that good man; *Cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.*

Ps. civ. 29. Jer. x. 23. Ps. xxxvii. 23. Psal. cxliii. 8, 10.

We are vain and uncertain in our opinions, fickle and irresolute in our purposes, slow and heavy in our proceedings; apt to faint and falter, to stumble and slip in all our practice; we do need, therefore, this sure oracle to consult in our doubts and darknesses; this faithful friend to direct and advise us in our affairs; this constant monitor to rouse and quicken us in our undertakings; this powerful guardian to support and establish us in our ways; it is, in respect to good men, this steady hand that holdeth the helm, and gently steereth their course through the blind tracks of religious practice; withdrawing them from those dangerous shelves of error and temptation, upon which they are apt to split; it is this heavenly gale, that filleth their sails with constant resolution, and fairly driveth them forward in their voyage toward eternal bliss. He softly doth whisper and insinuate good thoughts into us; doth kindle pious desires, doth cherish virtuous intentions, doth promote honest endeavours; he seasonably

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checketh and restraineth us from sin; he faithfully reproveth and upbraideth us for committing it; he raiseth wholesome remorse, shame, and displeasure for our unworthiness and folly; he sweetly warmeth our cold affections, inflaming our hearts with devotion toward God; he qualifieth us, and encourageth us to approach the throne of grace, breeding in us faith and humble confidence, prompting us fit matter of request, becoming our advocate and intercessor for the good success of our prayers; *through Christ Jesus,* saith St. Paul, *we have access by one Spirit unto the Father;* and, *the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should ask for as we ought; but the Spirit itself intercedeth for us.* Eph. ii. 18. Rom. viii. 26.

He guardeth us, he standeth by us, he sustaineth us in all trials and temptations, affording *grace sufficient* to escape or to endure them; *not suffering us to be tempted above what we are able.* 2 Cor. xii. 9. 1 Cor. x. 13.

He supporteth and comforteth us in our afflictions and distresses of all kinds, of our inward and outward estate: this David knew when in his penitential agonies he prayed, *Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me; restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit:* this those first Christians felt, who, under persecutions, and all outward discouragements, were yet *filled with joy,* and *did walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost;* whence that testimony of St. Paul concerning the Thessalonians; *Ye were followers of me, and of the Lord, receiving the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:* by it the blessed Saints, Martyrs, and Confessors being inspired, did not only with admirable patience, but incredible alacrity, undergo the extremest losses, ignominies and tortures, which the spite of hell and rage of the world could inflict on them. Psal. li. 11, 12. Acts xiii. 52. ix. 31. &c. 1 Thess. i. 6.

It is, in fine, this Holy Spirit which is the sole author and spring of all true delight, of all real content within us; of that *unspeakable joy in believing,* that *gaiety of hope,* that satisfaction in well doing: the partaking of his society, influence, and consolation, is indeed the most de- 1 Pet. i. 8. Rom. xv. 13. Heb. iii. 6.

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licious repast and richest cordial of our soul; the nearest resemblance, the sweetest foretaste of Paradise.

So many, so great; yea far more, far greater than, should the time give me leave, I could enumerate or express, are the benefits accruing to us from this most excellent gift of God, by him graciously conferred upon all good Christians; for which we should correspondently endeavour with all our hearts to praise and thank him; in all our lives to make grateful and worthy returns for it; especially by well using it to the greatest purposes, for which it was bestowed, of enabling us to serve God, of preserving us from sin, of conducting us to eternal salvation.

Let us earnestly invite this holy guest unto us, by our prayers unto him, who hath promised to bestow his Spirit upon those which ask it, to impart *this living stream* to every one which *thirsteth* after it; let us willingly receive him into our hearts, let us treat him with all kind usage, with all humble observance. Let us not exclude him by supine neglect, or rude *resistance;* let us not *grieve* him by our perverse and froward behaviour toward him; let us not *tempt him* by our fond presumptions, or base treacheries; let us not *quench* his heavenly light and heat by our foul lusts and passions: but let us admit gladly his gentle illapses; let us hearken to his faithful suggestions; let us comply with his kindly motions; let us demean ourselves modestly, consistently, and officiously toward him: that we may so do, God of his infinite mercy grant unto us, through *Jesus Christ our Lord;* to whom with the same *Holy Spirit*, for ever be all glory and praise. Amen.

Luke xi. 13. John vii. 37, 38, 39.

Acts vii. 51. Eph. iv. 30. Isa. lxiii. 10. Acts v. 9. 1 Thess. v. 19.

O God, the strength of all them that put their trust in thee, mercifully accept our prayers; and because, through the weakness of our mortal nature, we can do no good thing without thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping of thy commandments we may please thee both in will and deed, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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